THE FEMALE FIGURE IN MOVEMENT

BY THOMAS JENNINGS

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WATSON-GUPTILL PUBLICATIONS/NEW YORK
PITMAN PUBLISHING/LONDON

This book is dedicated to the women in my life:
Rosalie Virginia, Karen Rosalie, and Bess Anna

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First published 1971 in the United States by Watson-Guptill Publications,
a division of Billboard Publications, Inc.
1515 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036

Published in Great Britain by Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd.
39 Parker Street, London WC2B 5PB
ISBN 0-273-00976-1

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 75-133978
ISBN 0-8230-1650-1
ISBN 0-8230-1651-X pbk.

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Manufactured in U.S.A.

First Printing, 1971
Second Printing, 1971
Third Printing, 1976

FOREWORD

From the images drawn on cave walls by prehistoric man to the abstract paintings of the present day, the human figure has been a dominant and recurring theme in art. Artists of every age have expended their talents in representing the human body. They have even cast their unseen deities in anthropomorphic forms.

The reason for this preoccupation with the human form is the instinctive preference for one's own kind; it is also likely that this tendency will continue. Knowledge of the various aspects of the human body will, therefore, always be necessary to artists.

The traditionally preferred practice of acquiring such knowledge is to draw from the living model, at first under the tutelage of competent instructors, and later alone. Such practice is a means of increasing expressive skills and of reinforcing information about structure, form, and articulation.

Unfortunately, various considerations often make drawing from life either inconvenient or impossible. The obstacles of time, space, money, and availability of models cannot always be overcome. For these reasons most professional artists maintain files containing extensive amounts of photographic scrap on the human figure.

However, in candid or unposed photographs, much anatomical information may be lacking or obscured by objects, clothing, or other figures. On the other hand, posed photographs, while possessing more image clarity tend to be stereotyped and do not reveal certain aspects of movement.

None of the photographs shown here are posed; the model was not subjected to a series of bracketed exposures from which the best were selected. All apparent poses are single segments of a continuous action. The lighting varied with the position of the model. Her own grace of movement occasionally coincided with fortunate light modulation and optimum exposure to produce a particularly attractive image.

This book is intended to be an artist's supplement to his life drawing studies, and to be used as a reference when the model is not available. Additionally, the technique of rapid sequence photography which succeeds in freezing the subject in transitional phases of movement reveals aspects of position which would ordinarily escape notice in the life class.

With such a purpose in mind, extensive verbalization about the figure, its structure, detail, and nomenclature is superfluous here. This information is readily supplied by a multiplicity of anatomically oriented drawing books.

The idea of sequential photographs of moving figures is not a new one. I must express my admiration and amazement at the technical difficulties so ingeniously overcome by Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904) whose monumental contribution to the study of motion remains the definitive work in this field. I have taken advantage of technical progress since his day to improve image quality, and have considered some of my own needs as an artist in selecting types of action which may prove helpful to others.

Some of these sequences do not include all of the exposures made. They have been edited to provide key aspects of successive motion, rather than small differences. In other cases, all exposures have been used. By this means, I was able to show not only a more complete record of movement by a certain model, but a variety of image sizes for significant actions.

I wish to express my appreciation to my models (only two of whom have had previous professional experience) for so patiently enduring the glaring lights, blown bulbs, tripping circuit breakers and the like, in order to provide suitable photographs for this volume.

Thomas Jennings
Santa Monica, 1970

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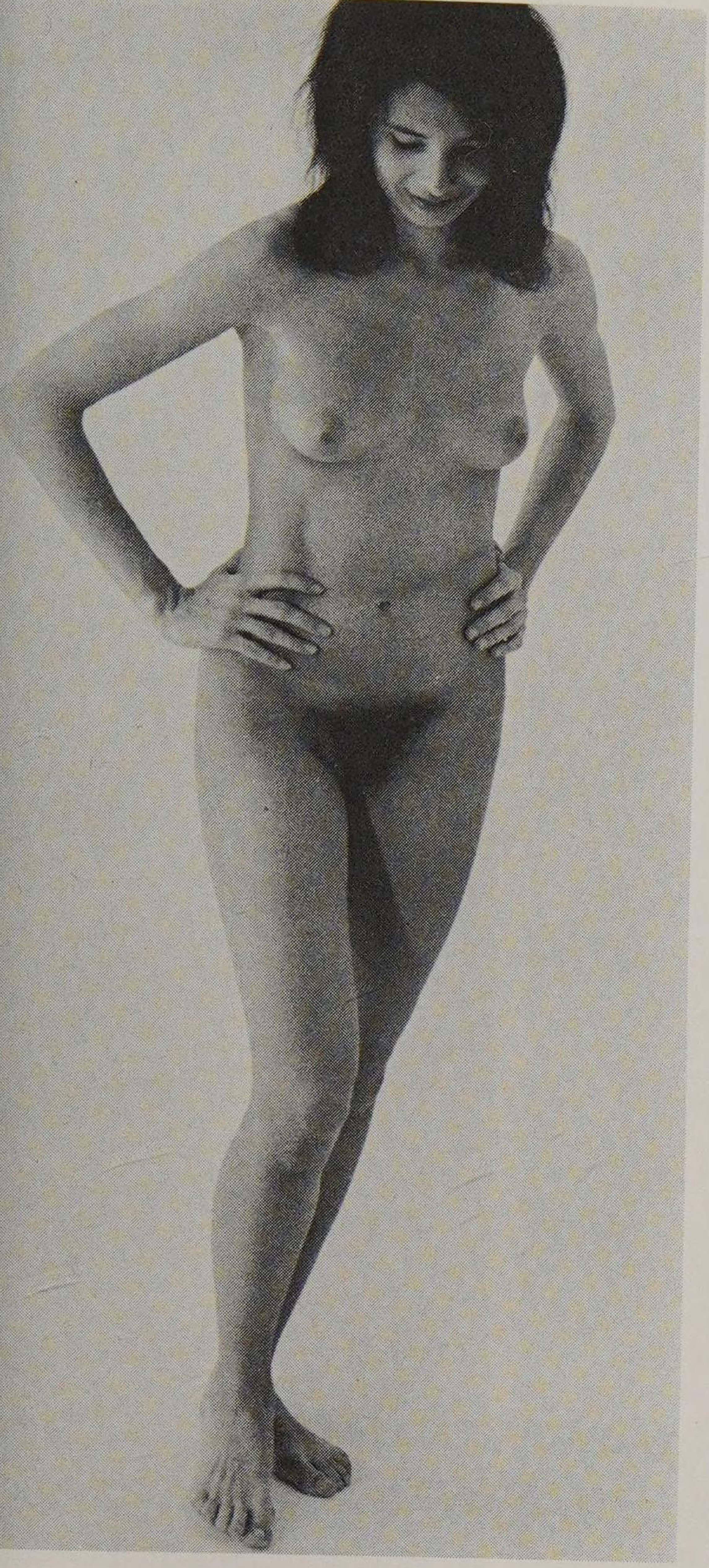
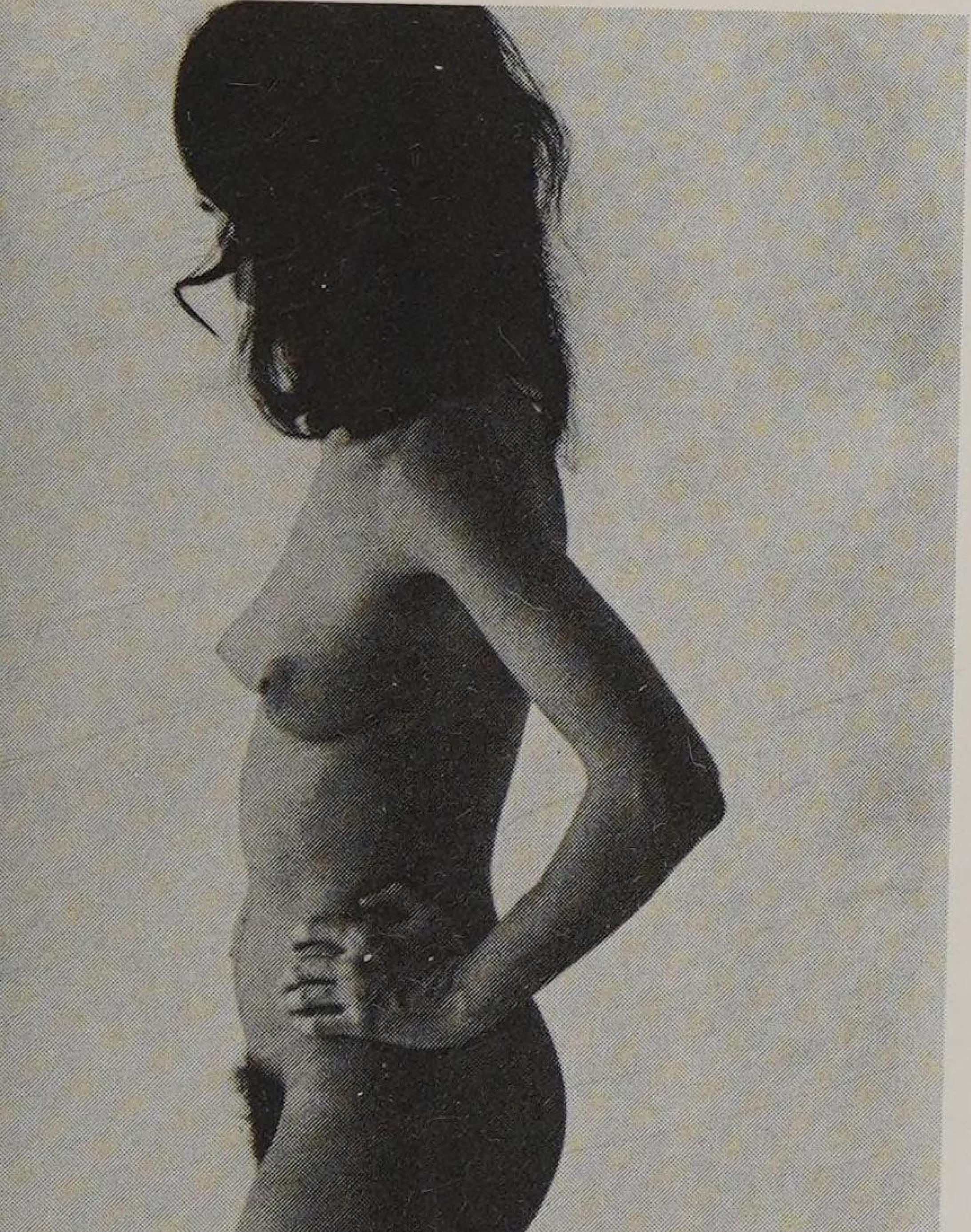
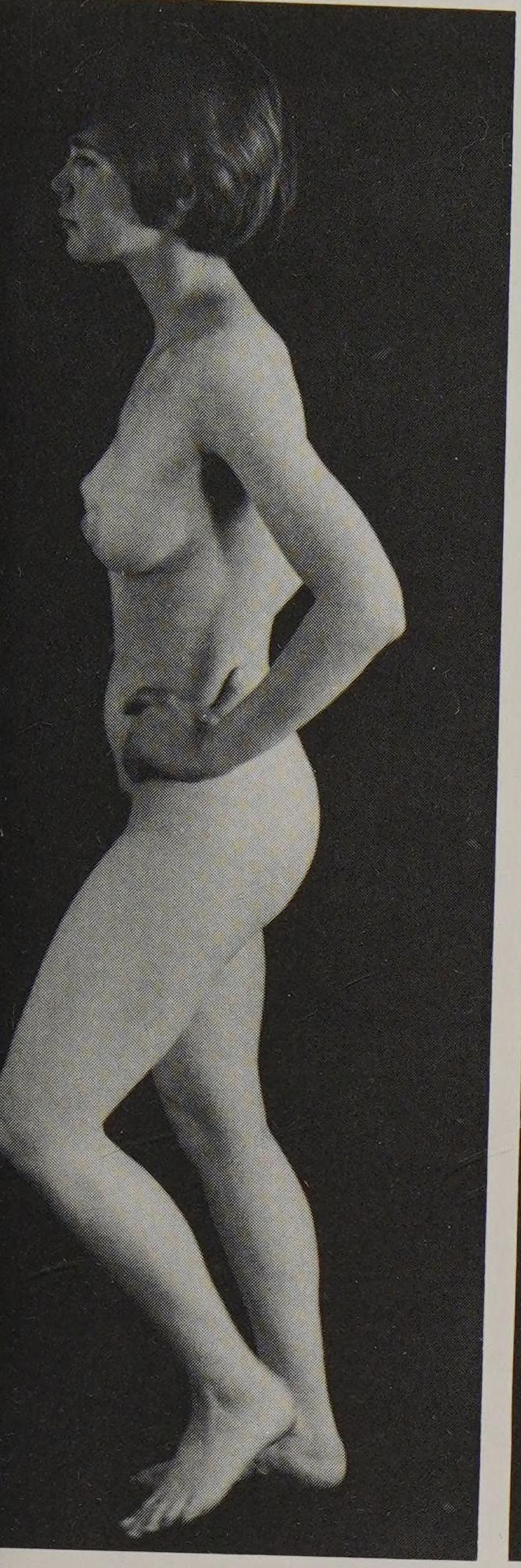
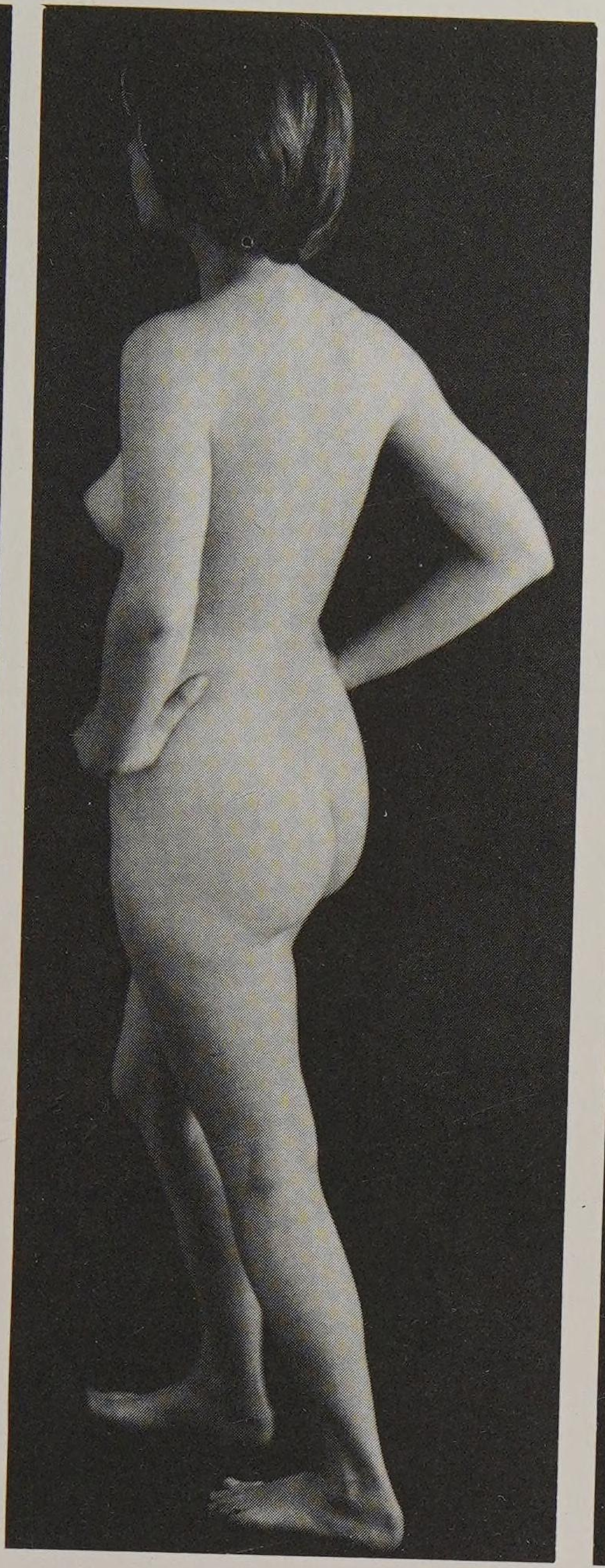
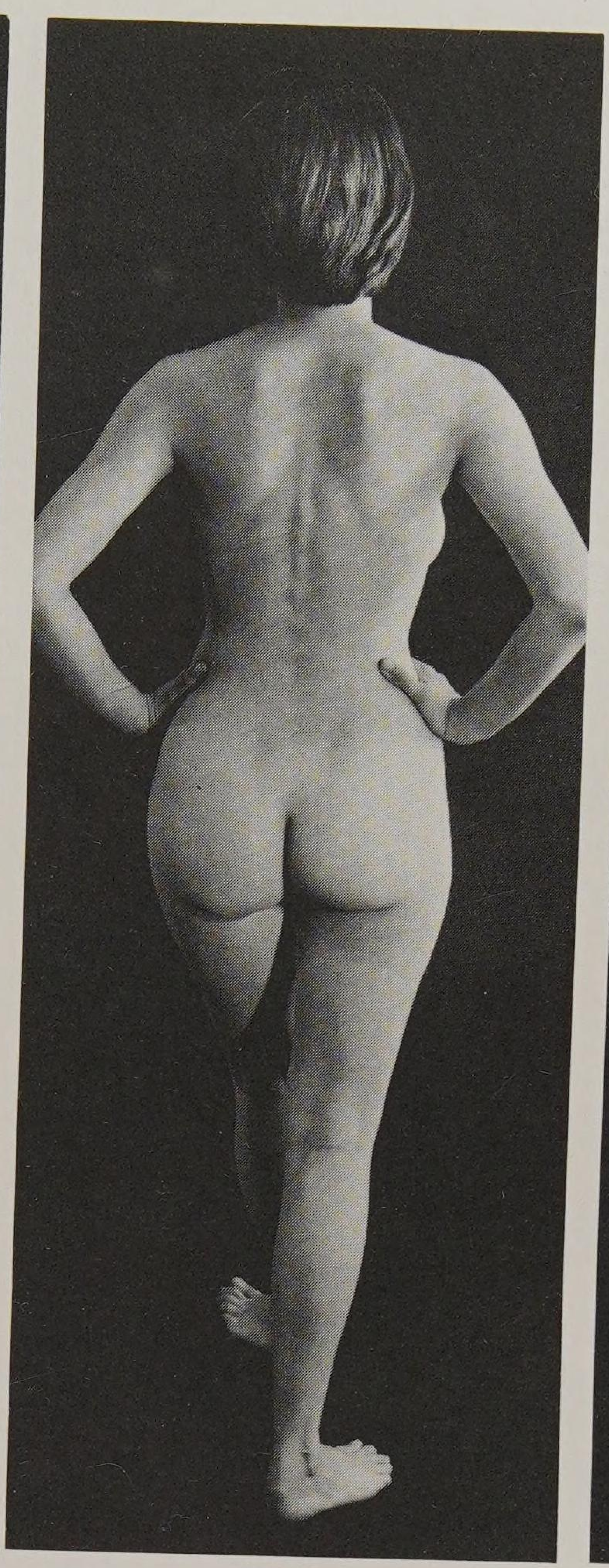
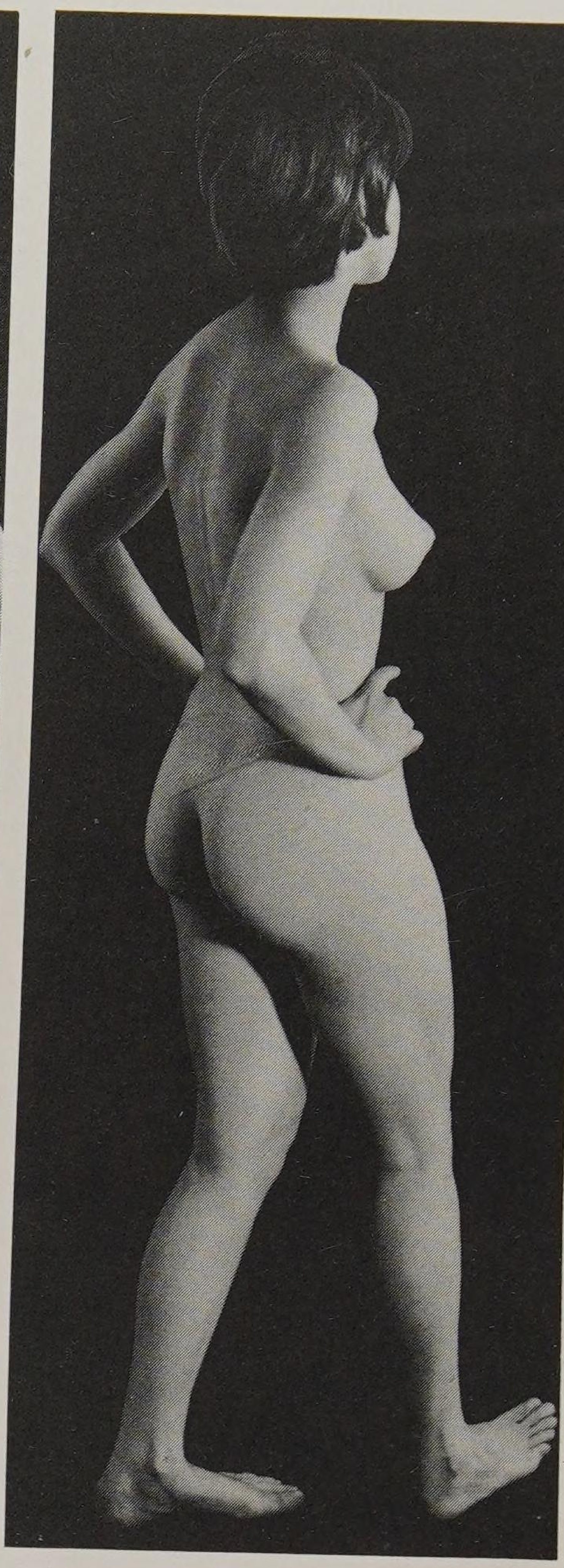
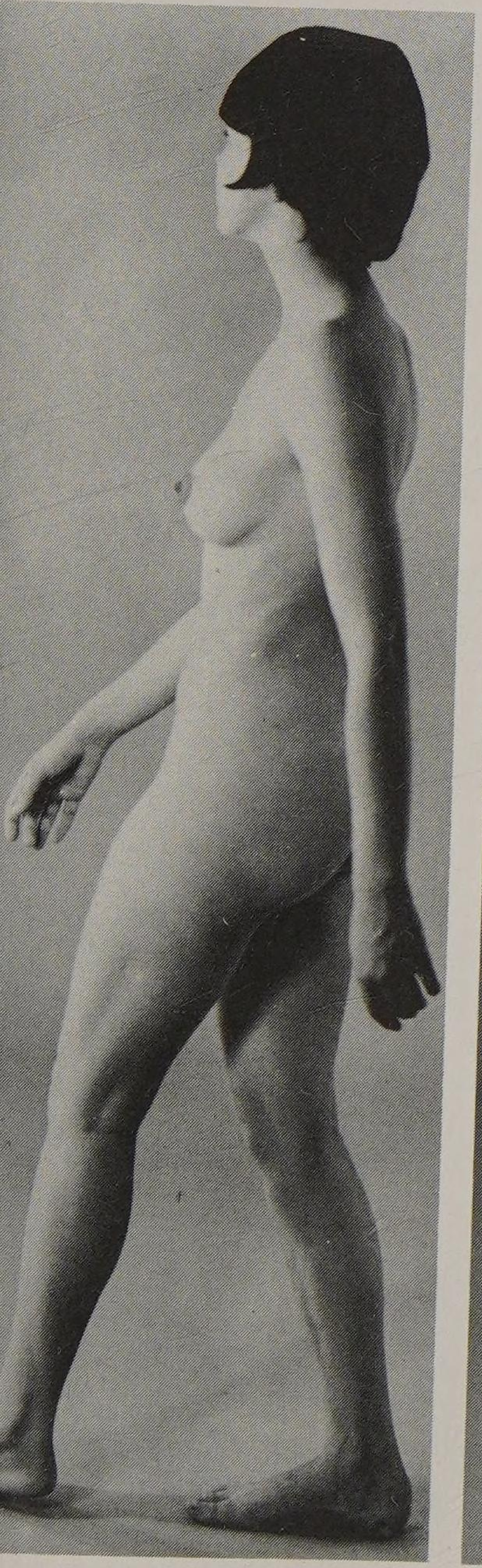
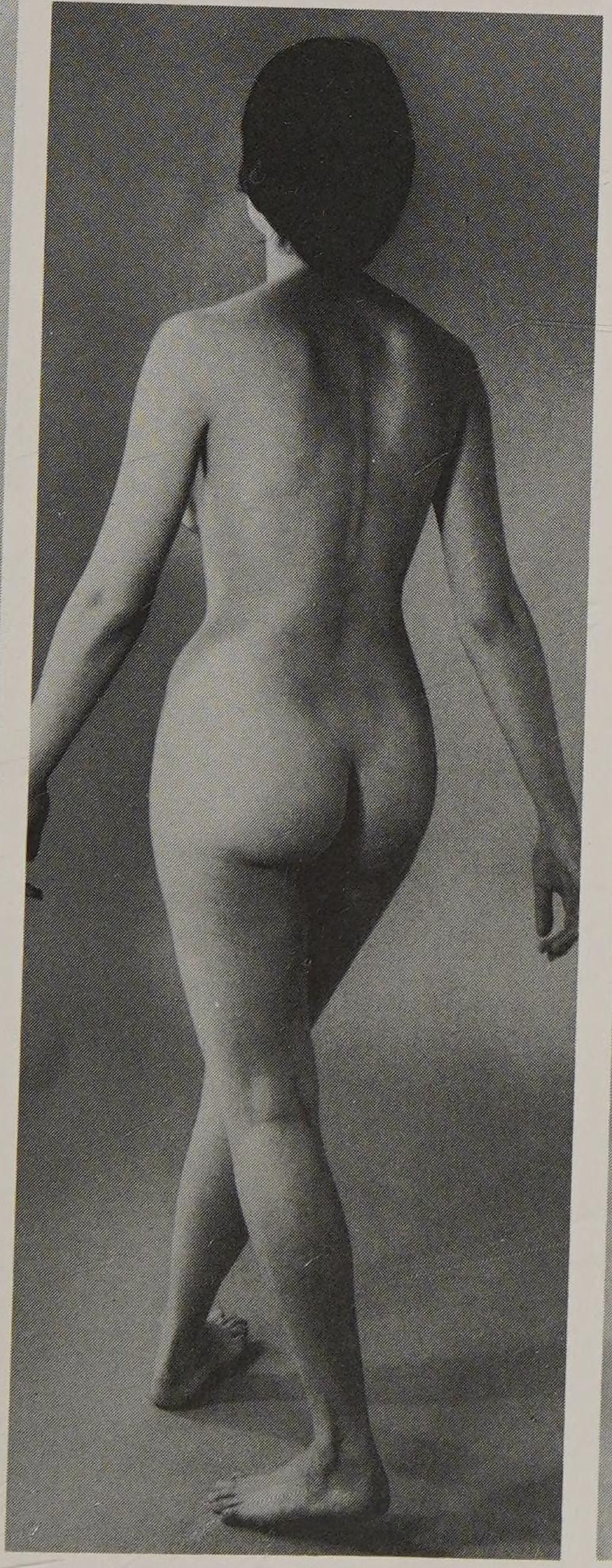
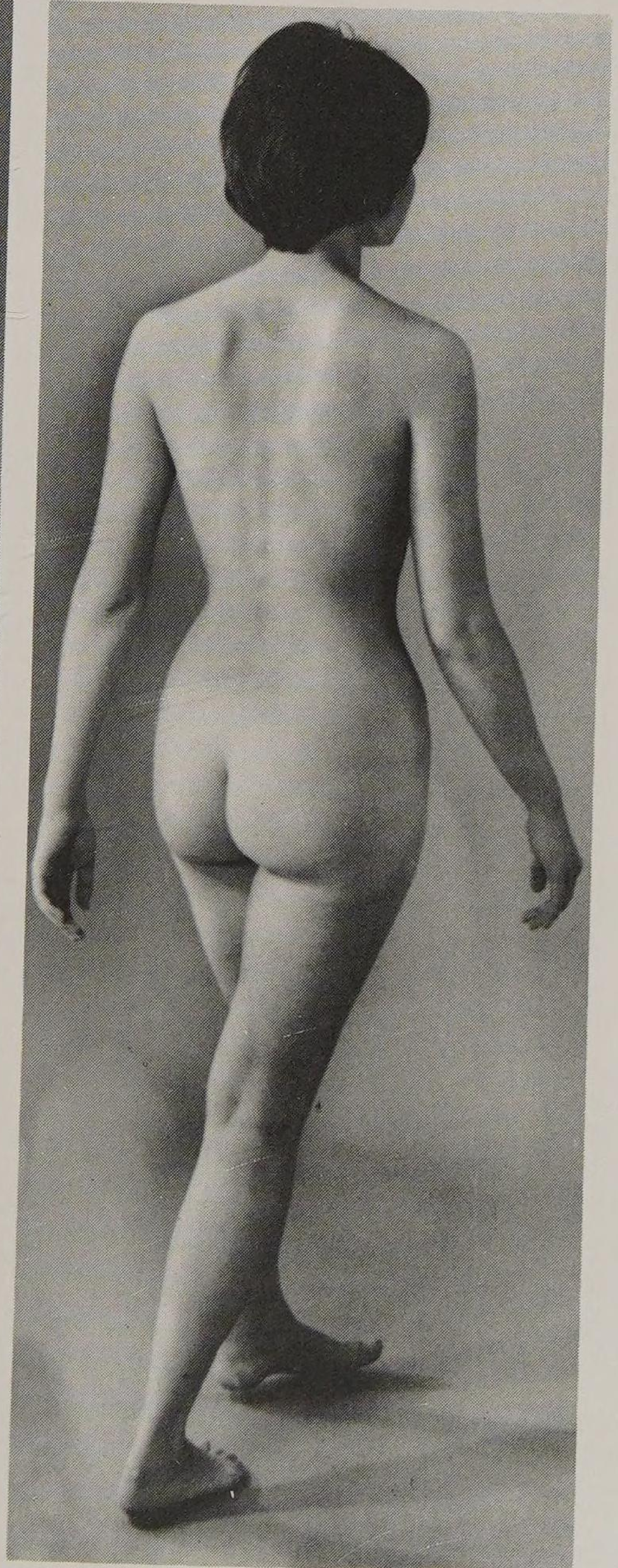
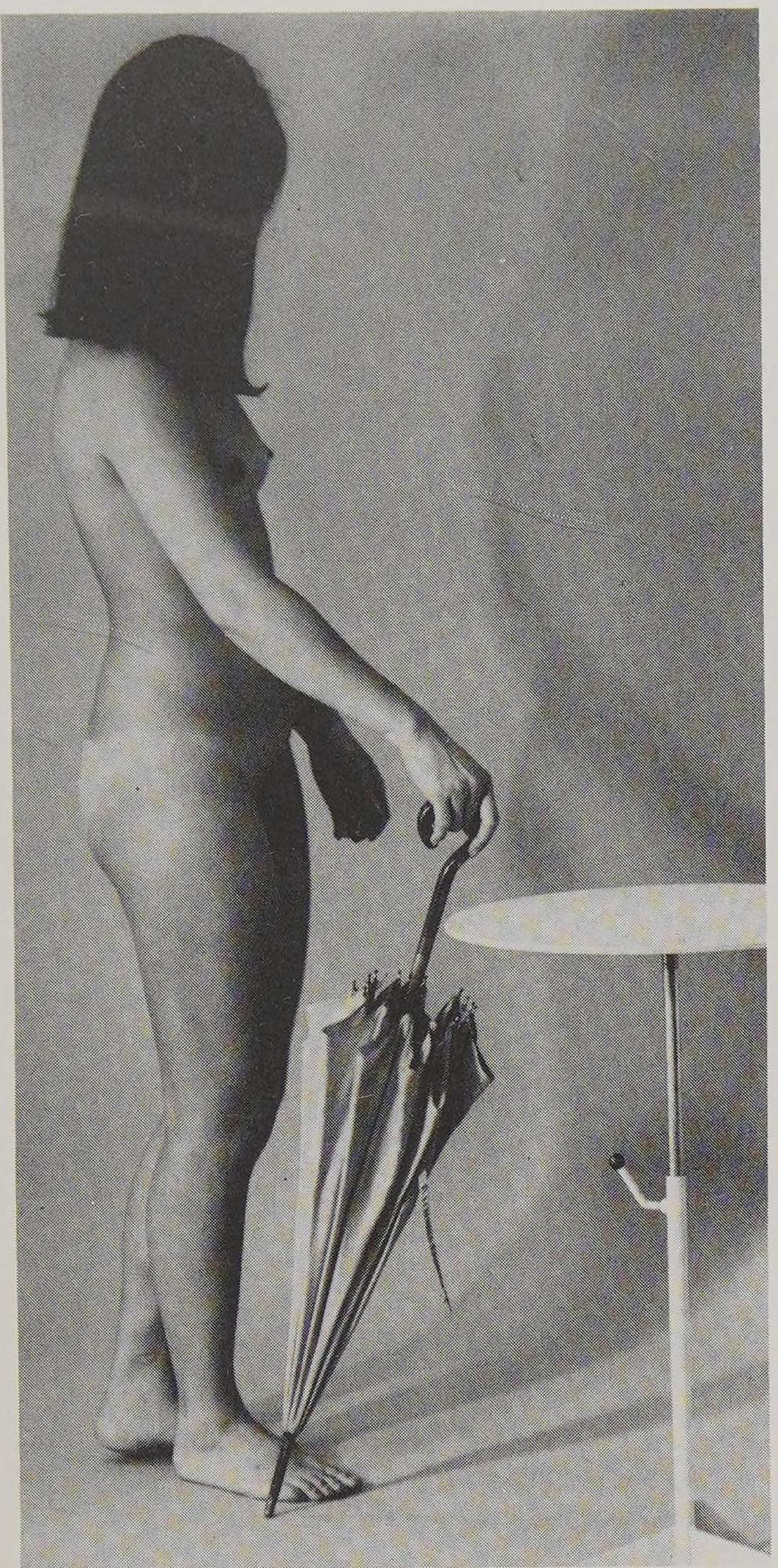
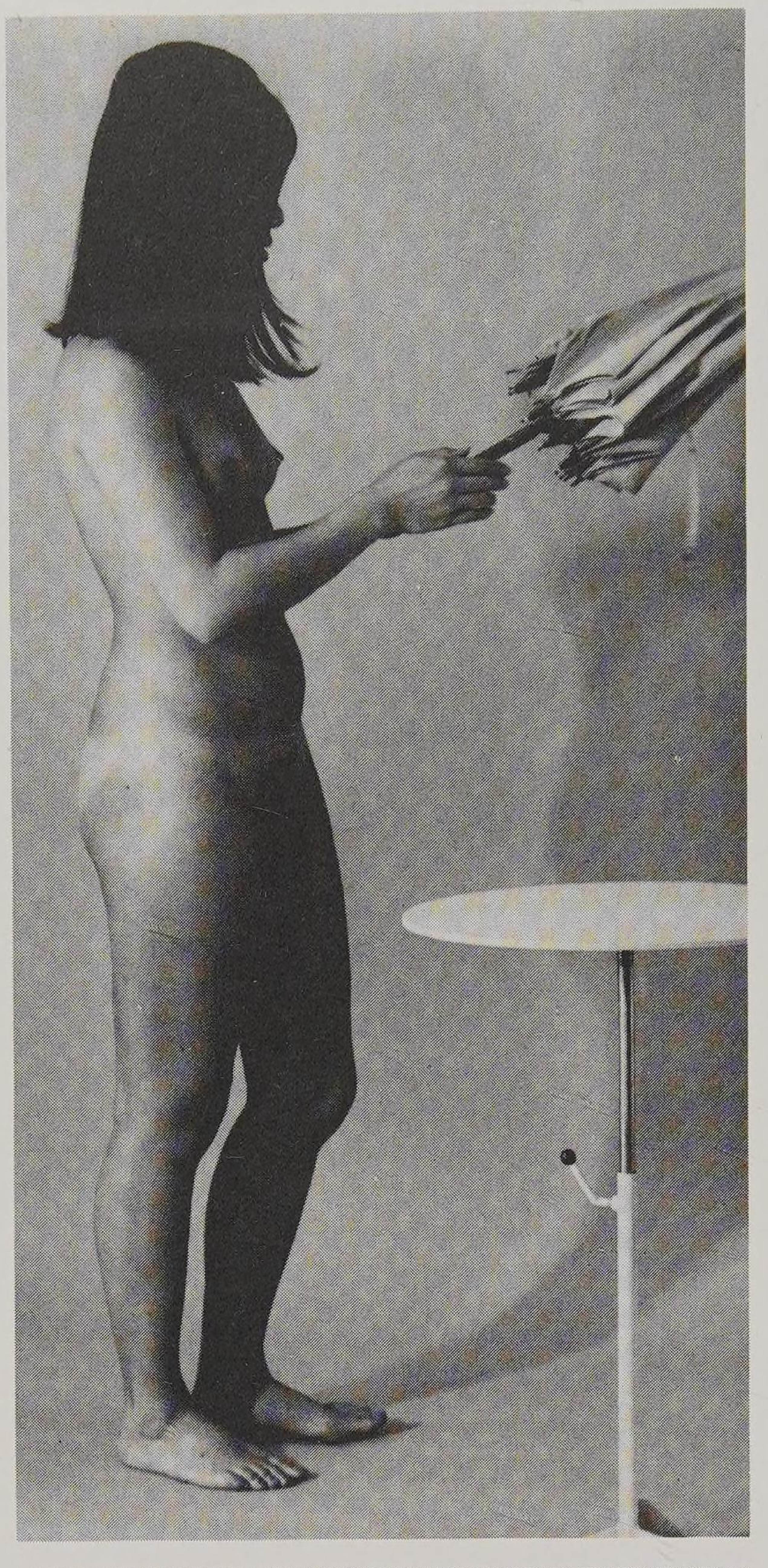
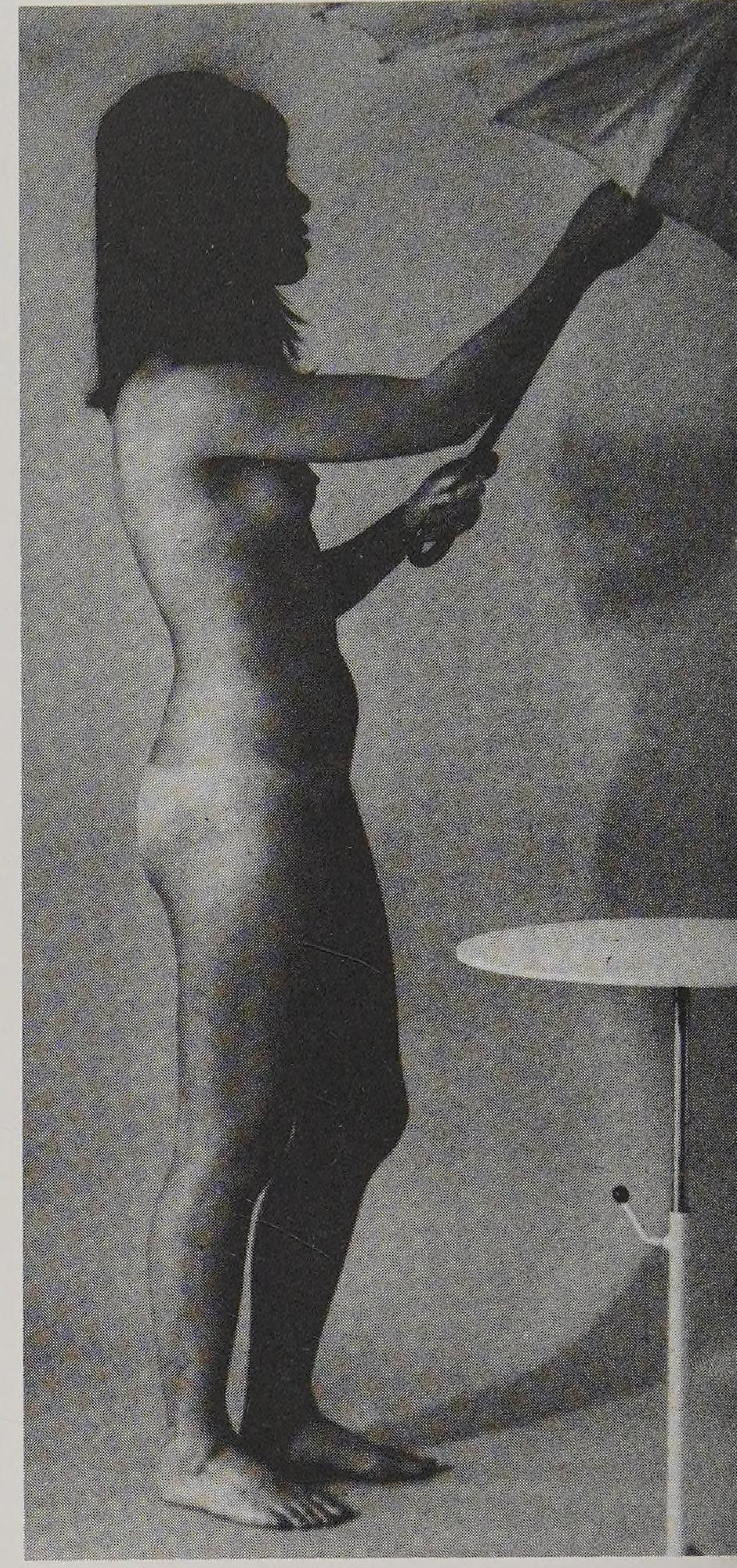
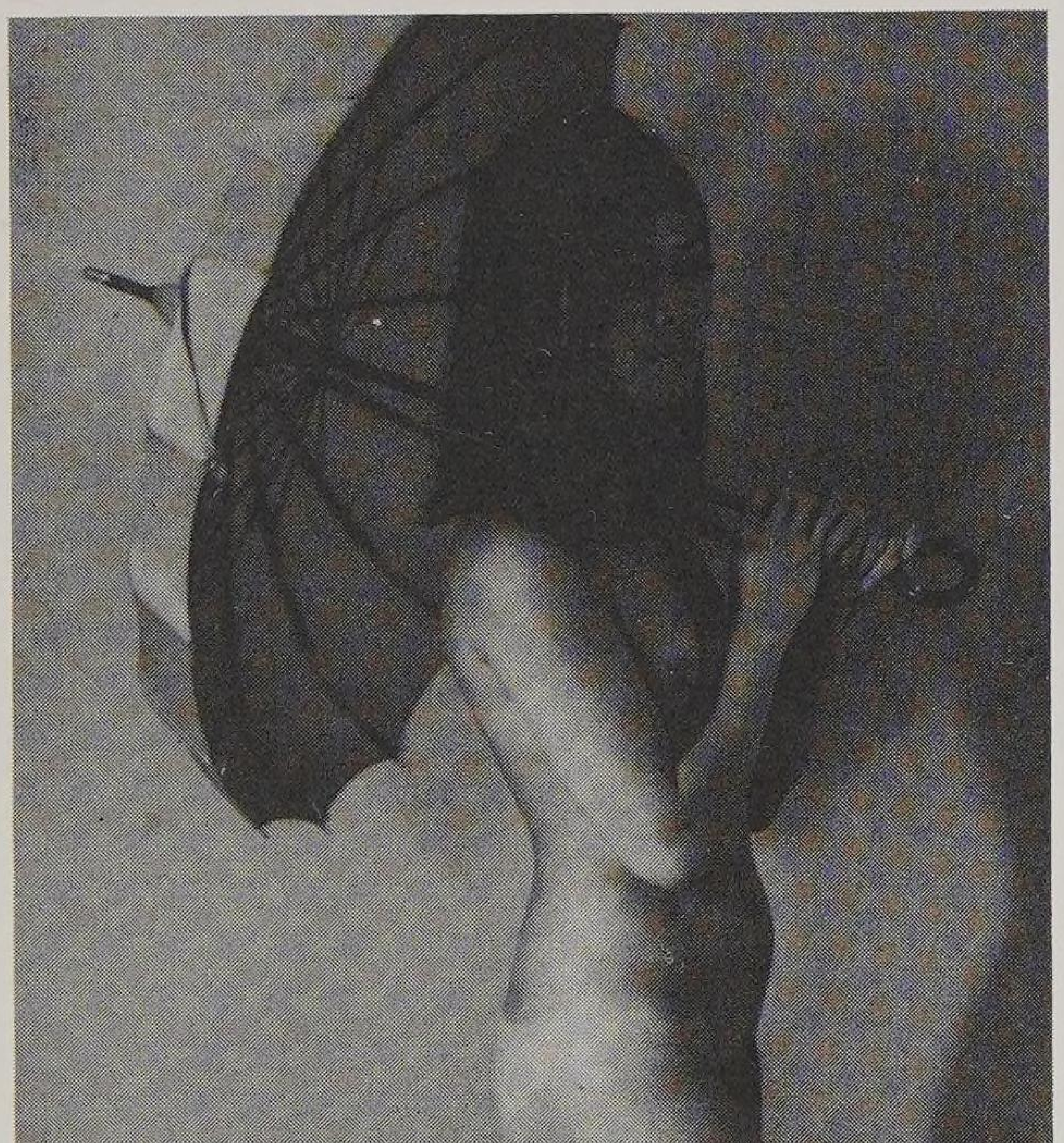
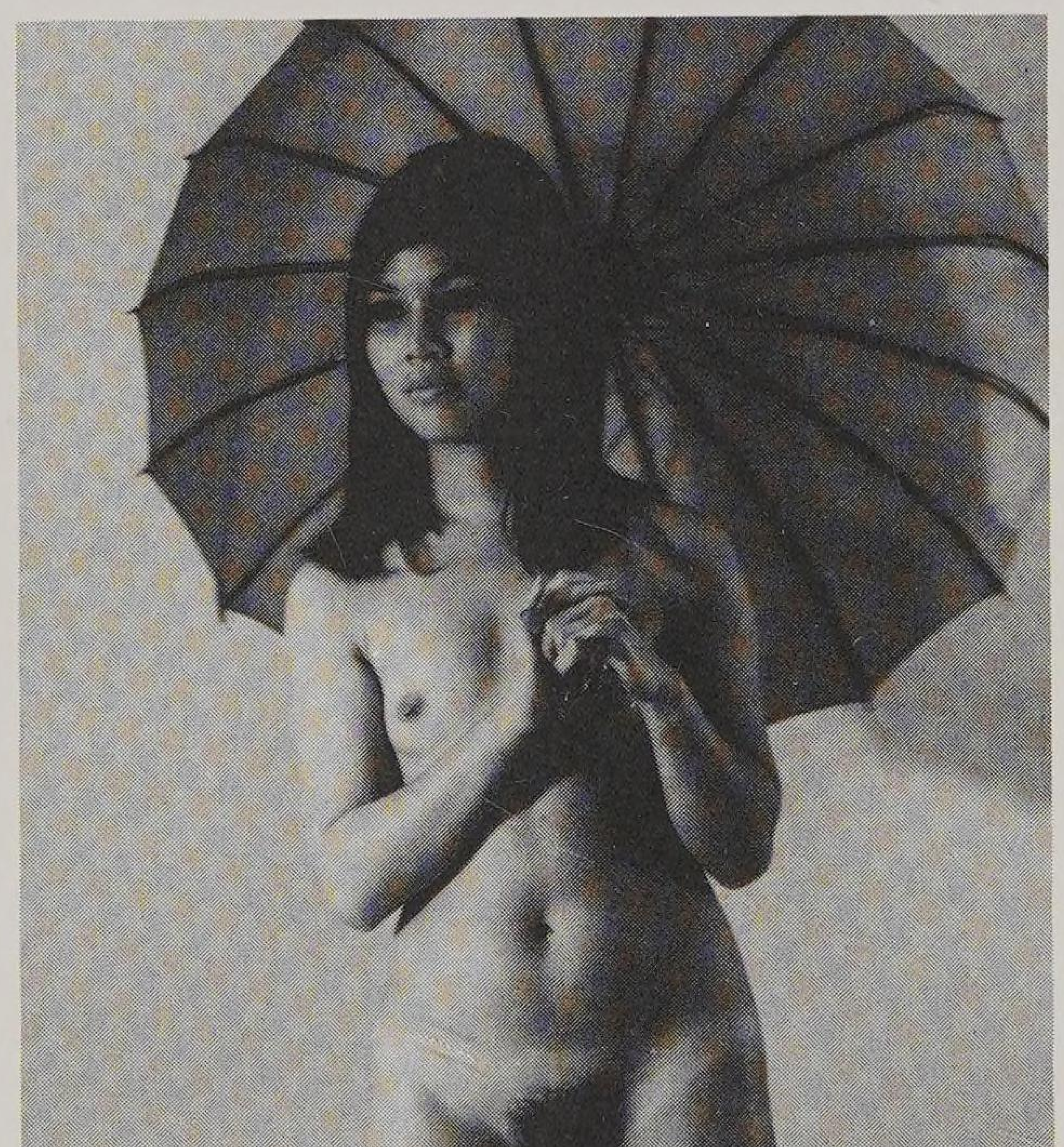
Fie, fie upon her!
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motion of her body.

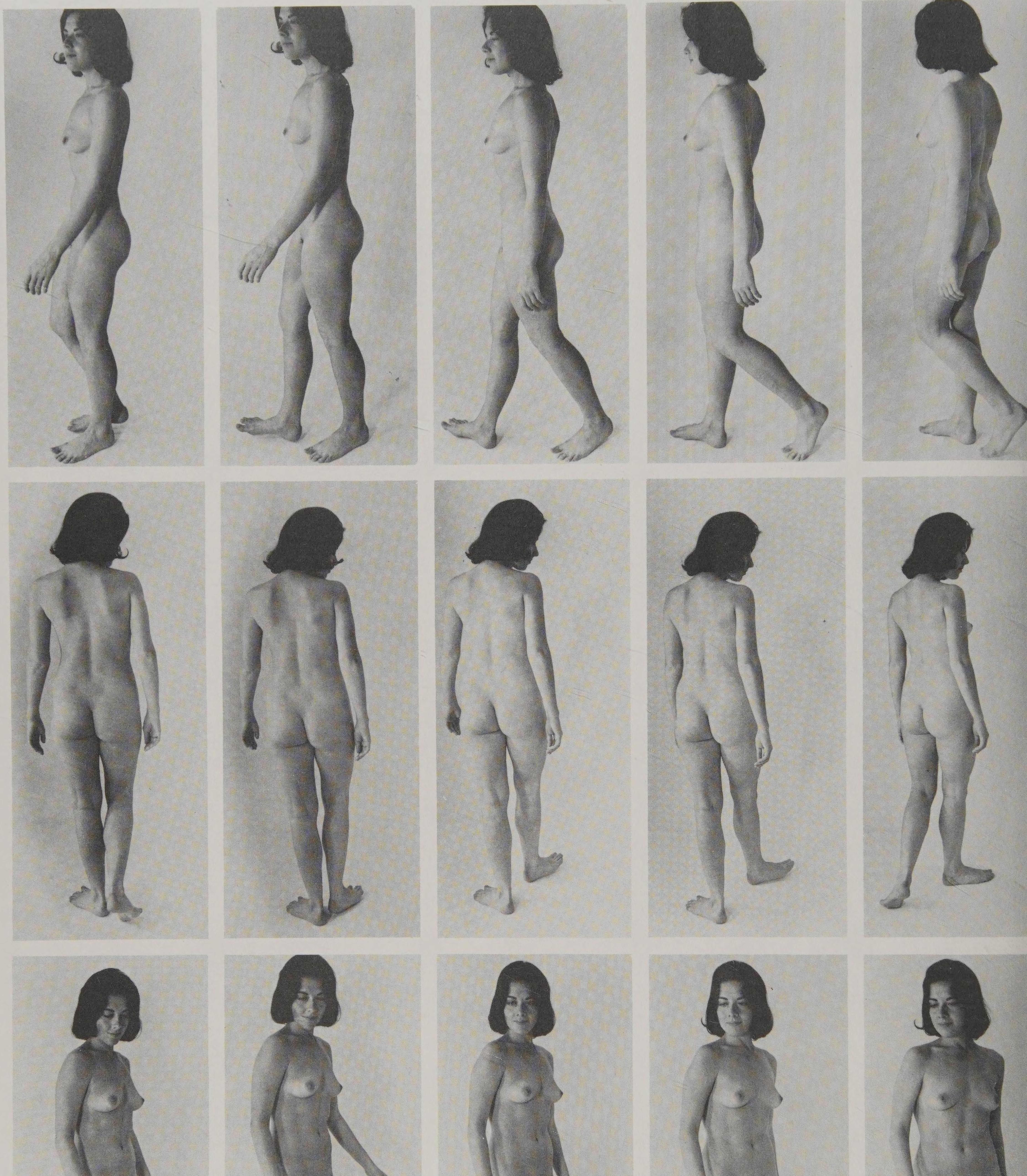
William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*

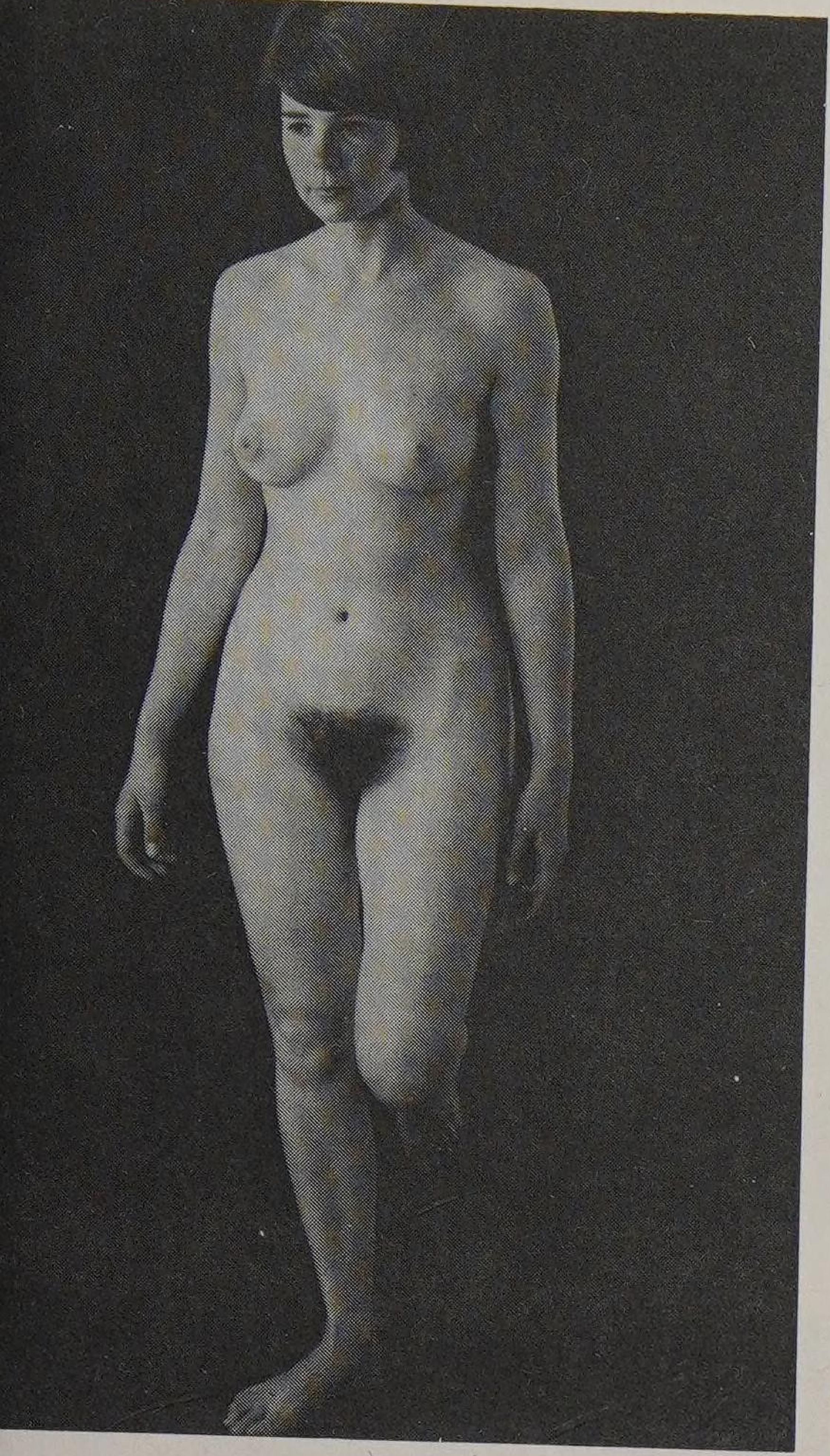
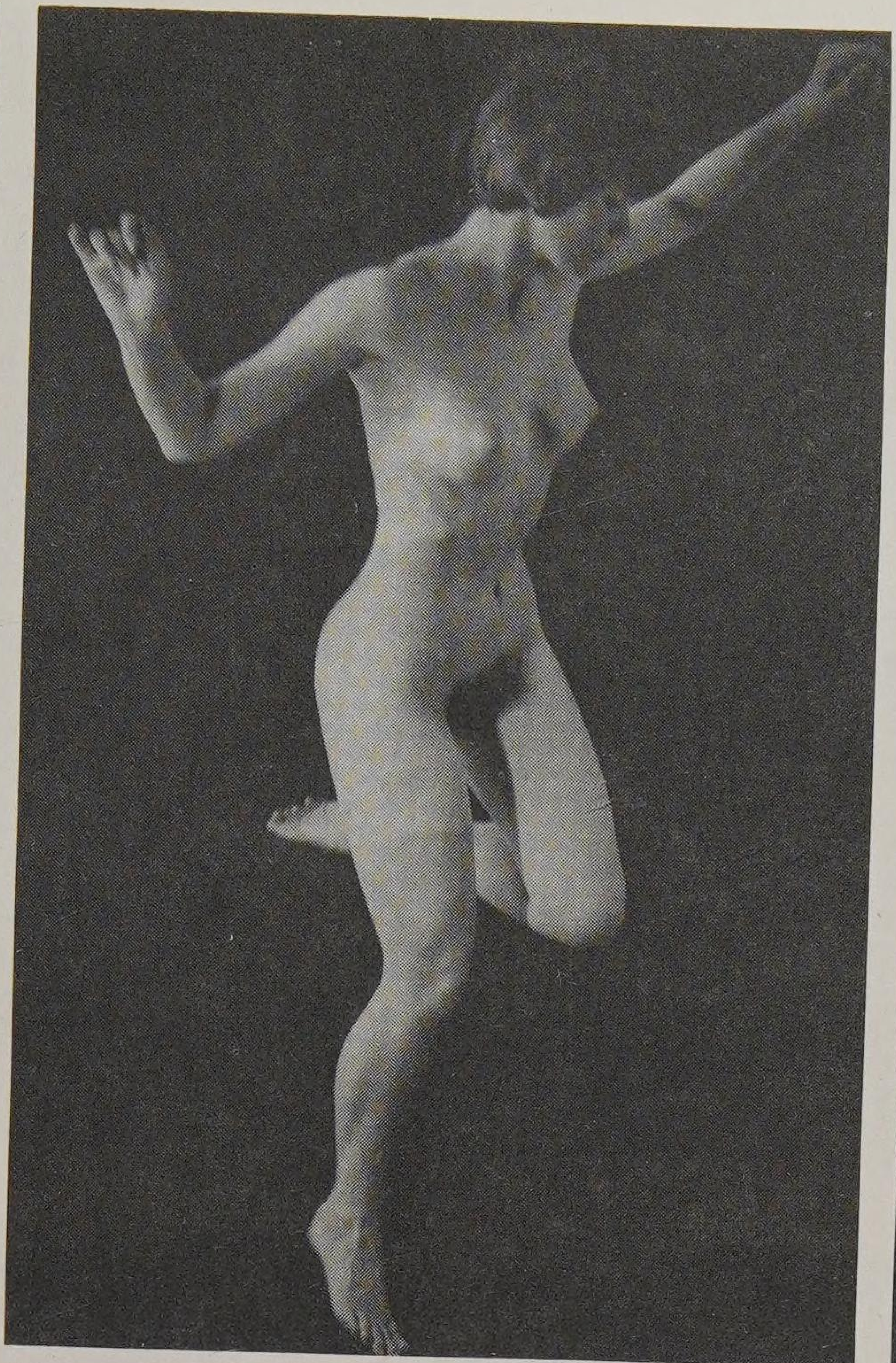


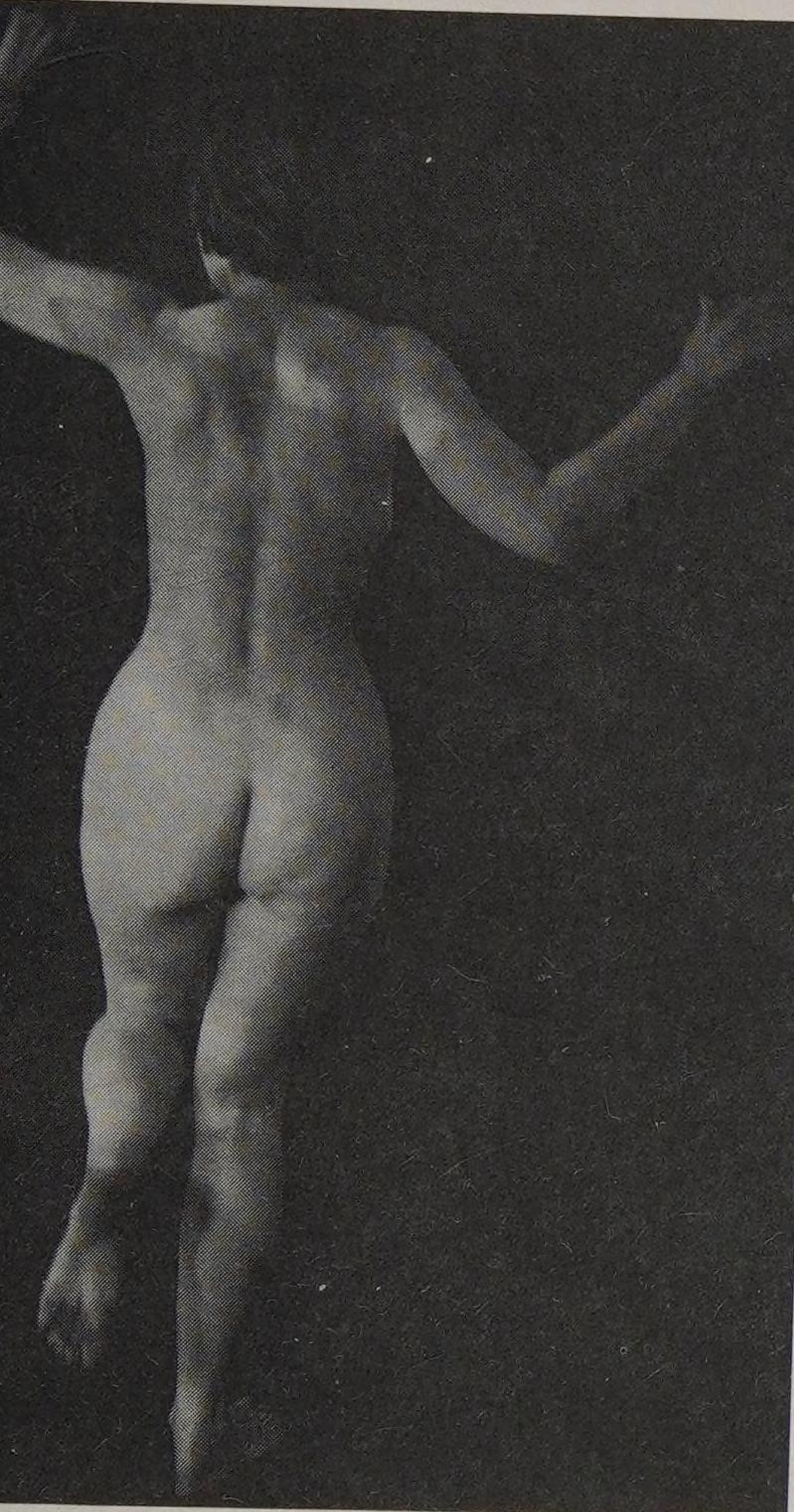
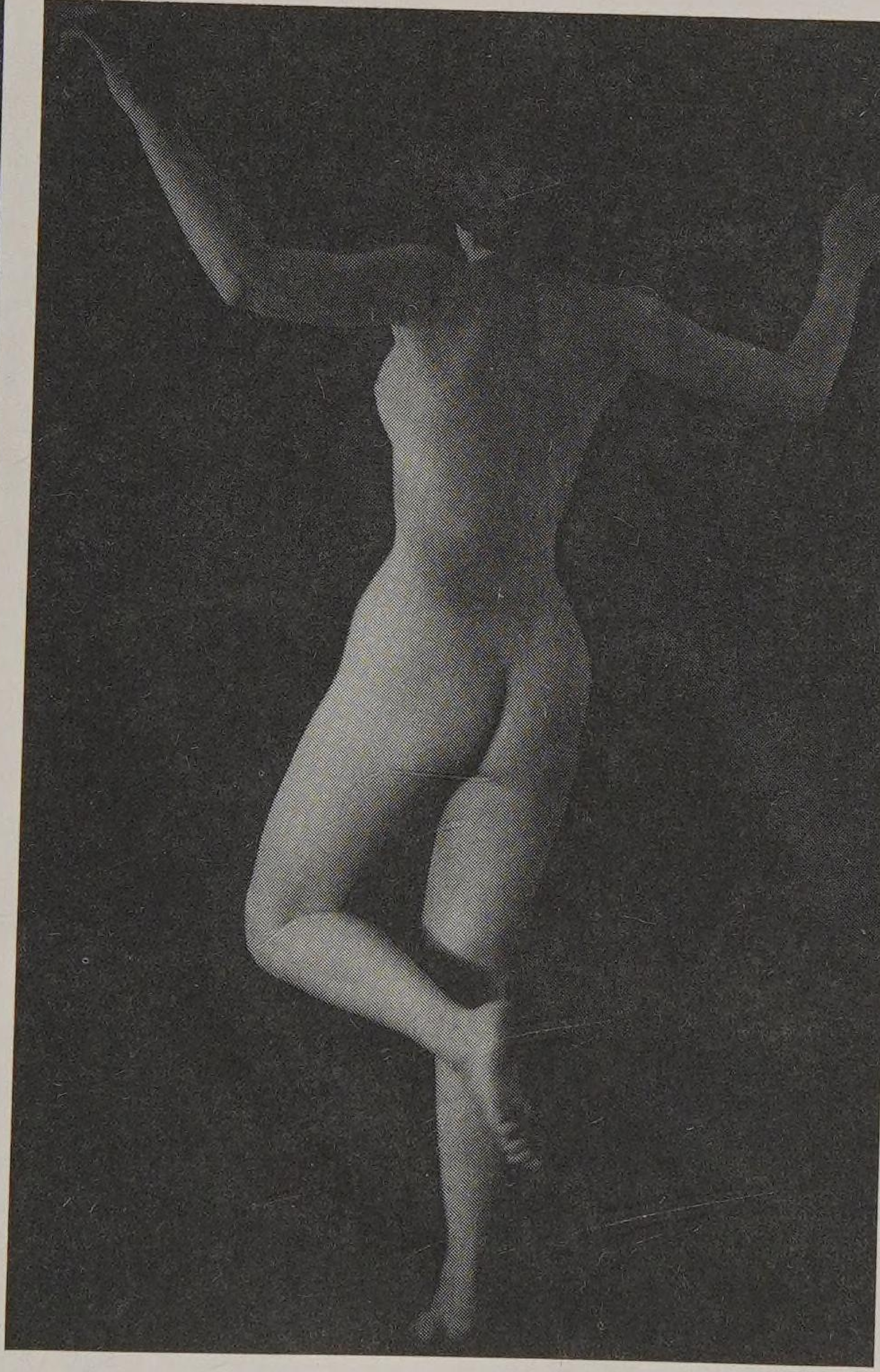
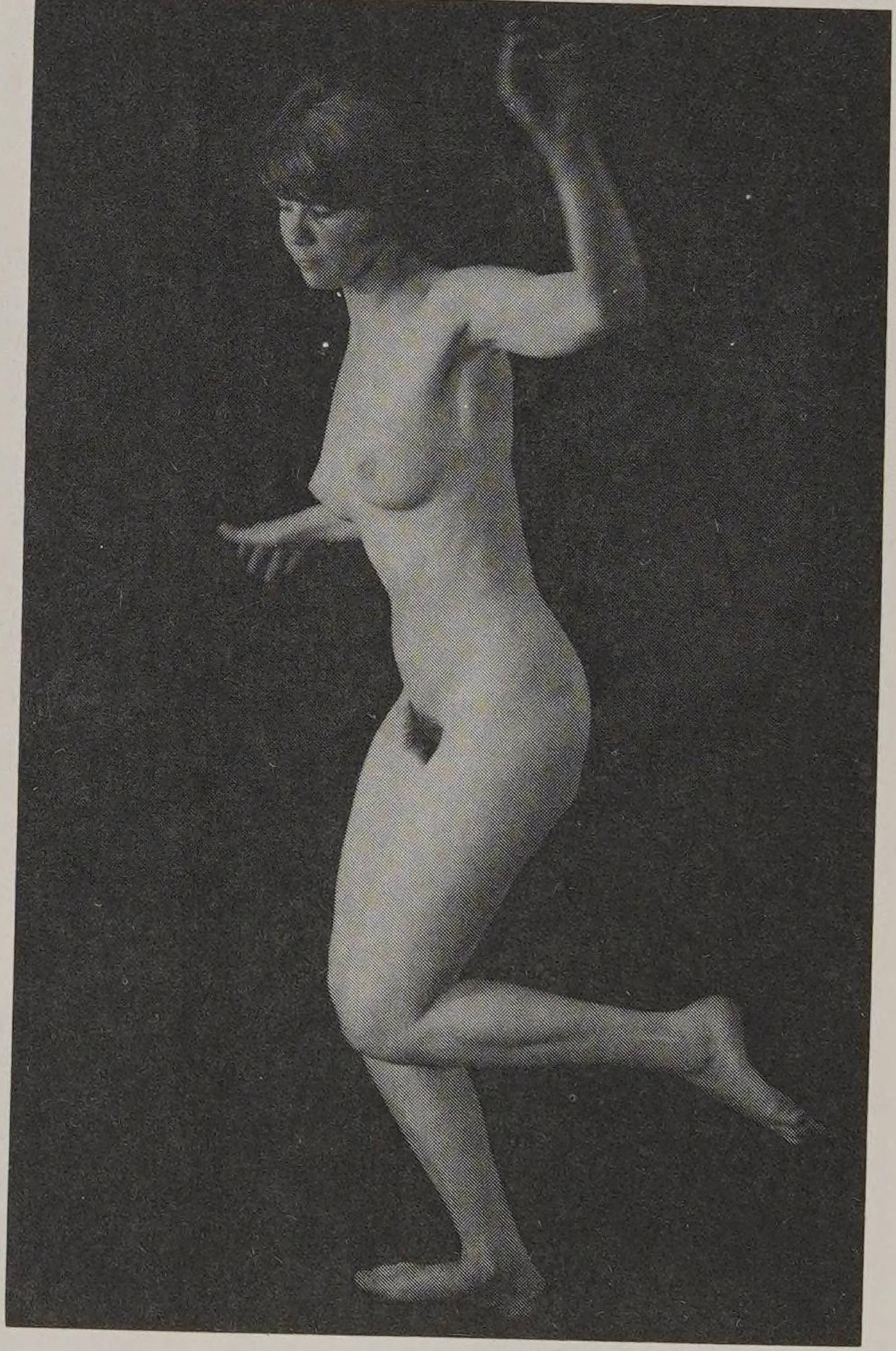


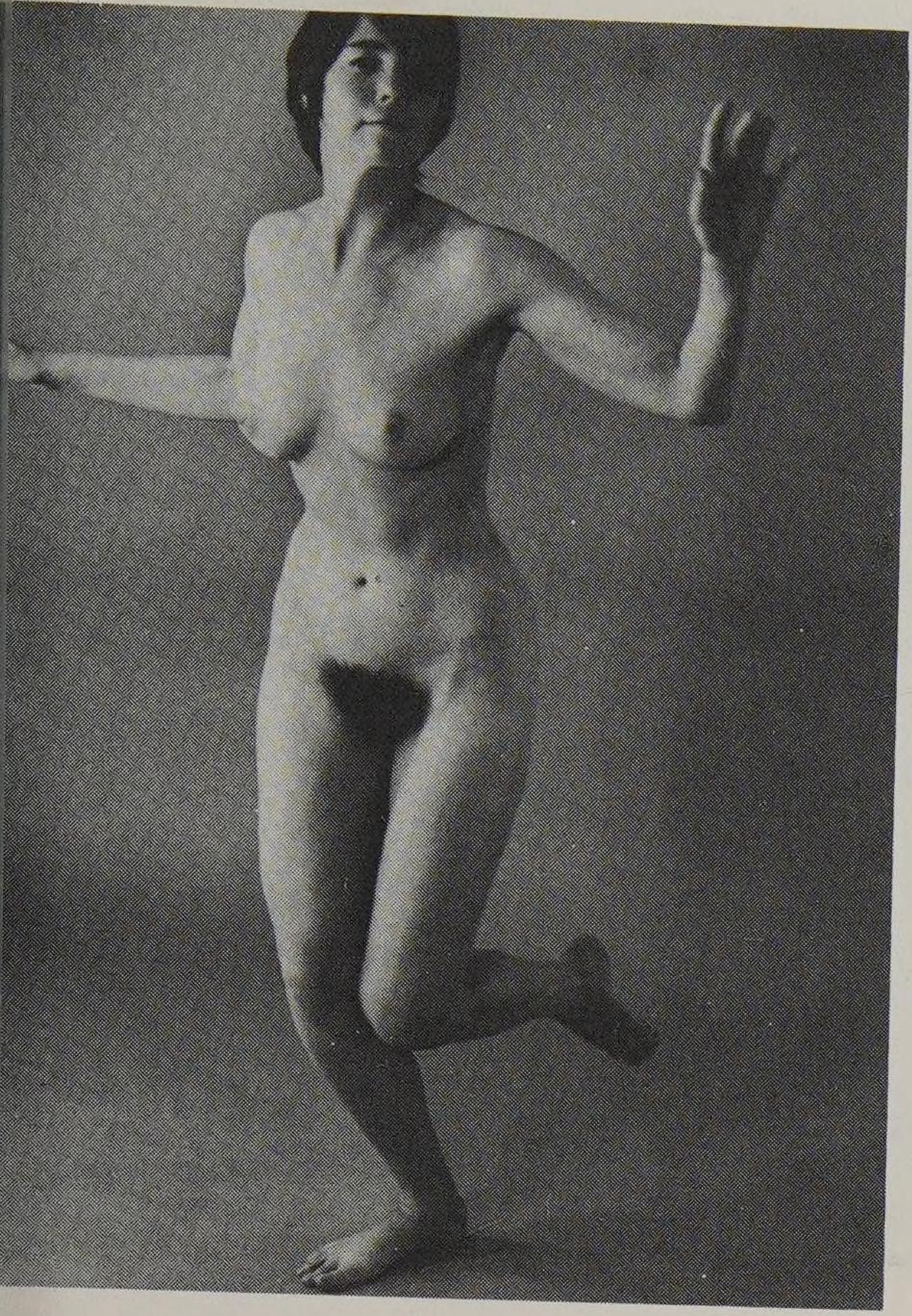
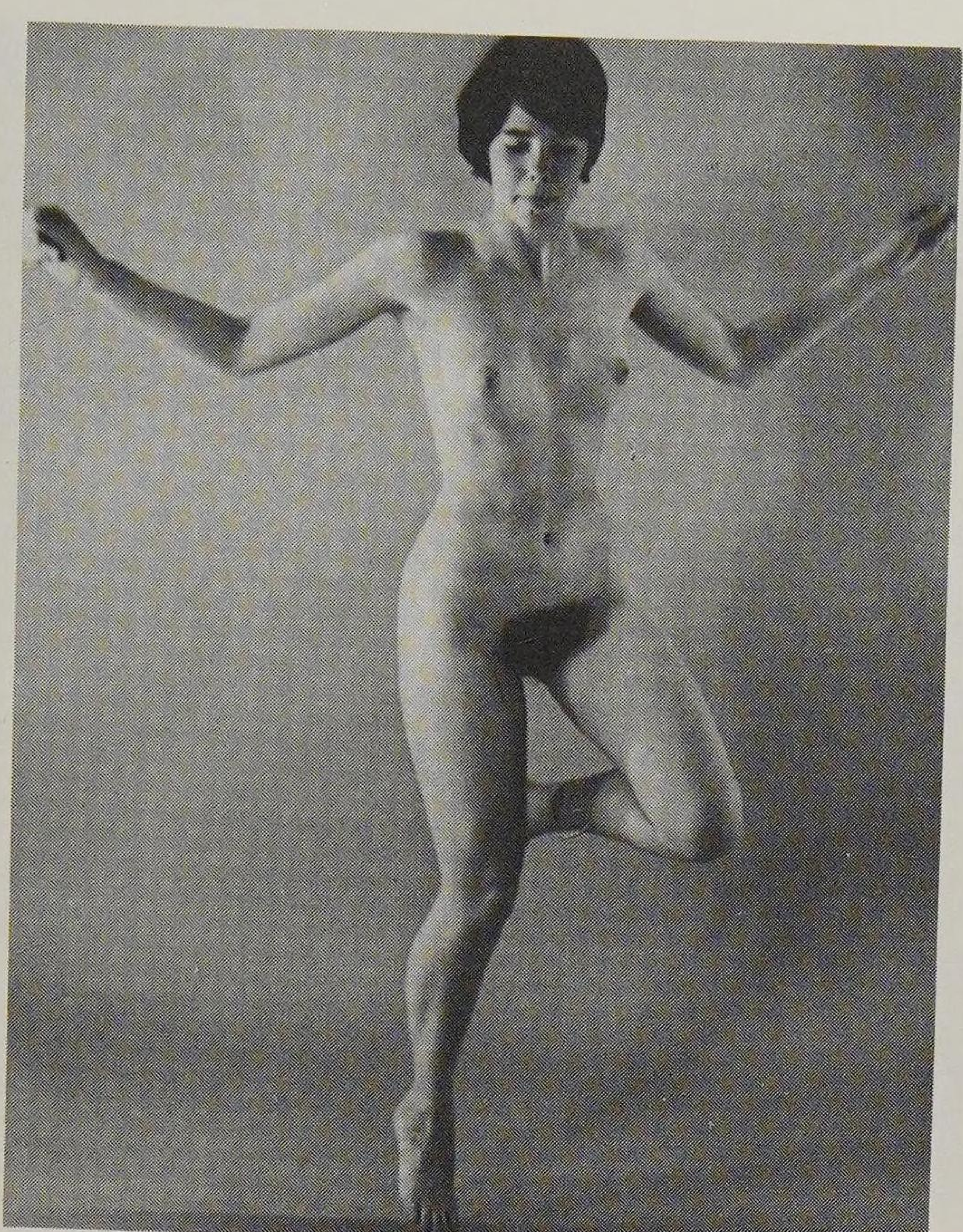
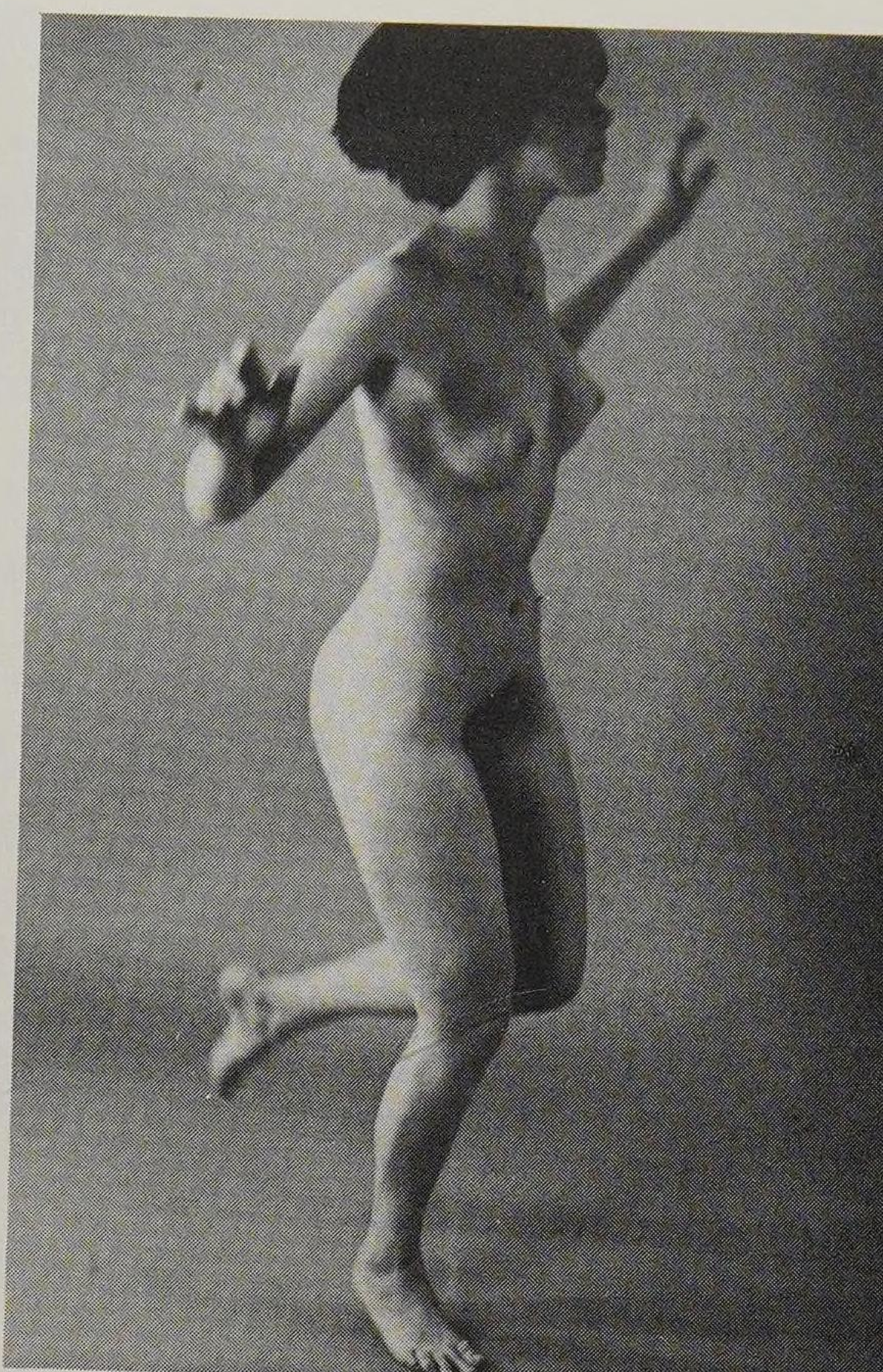








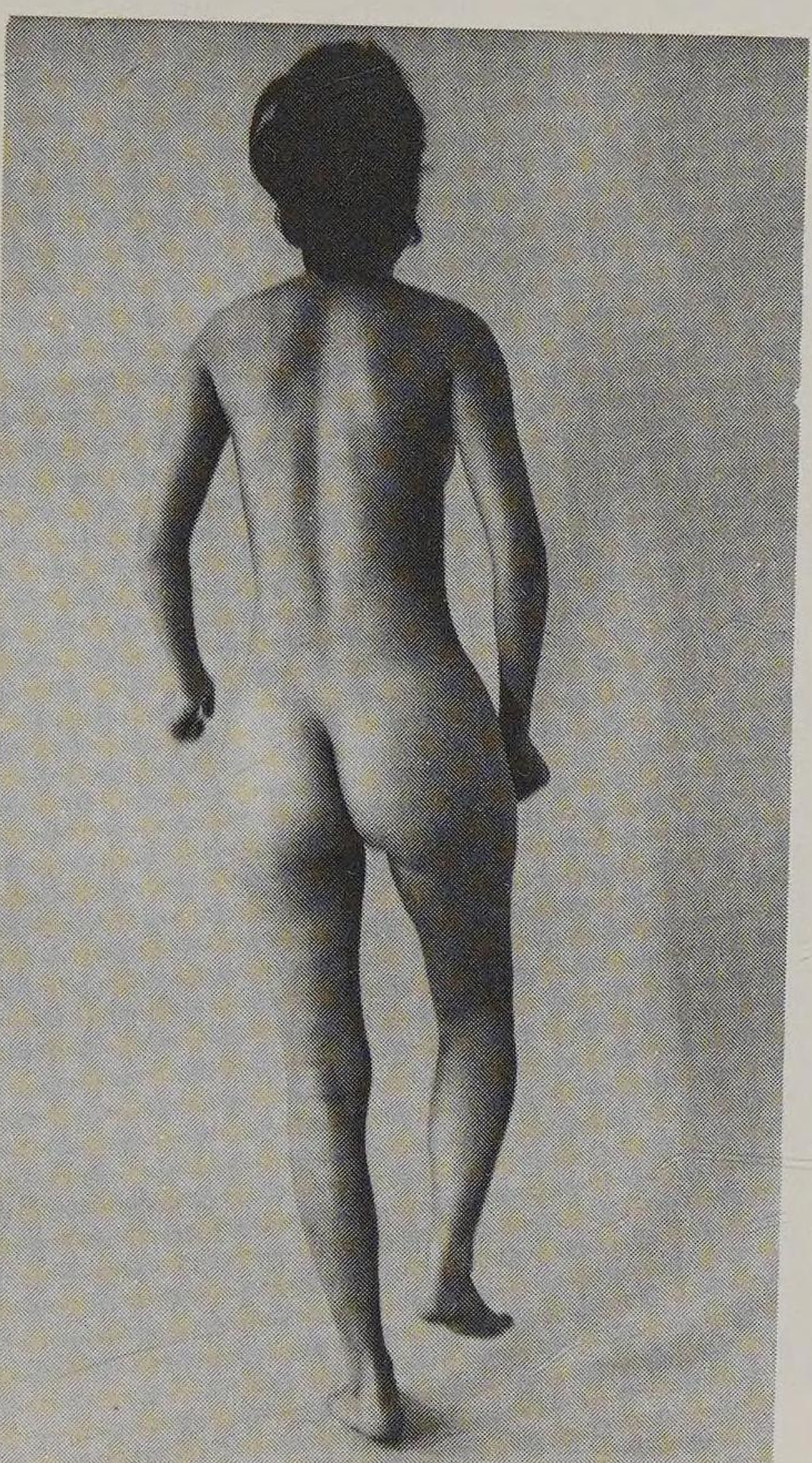
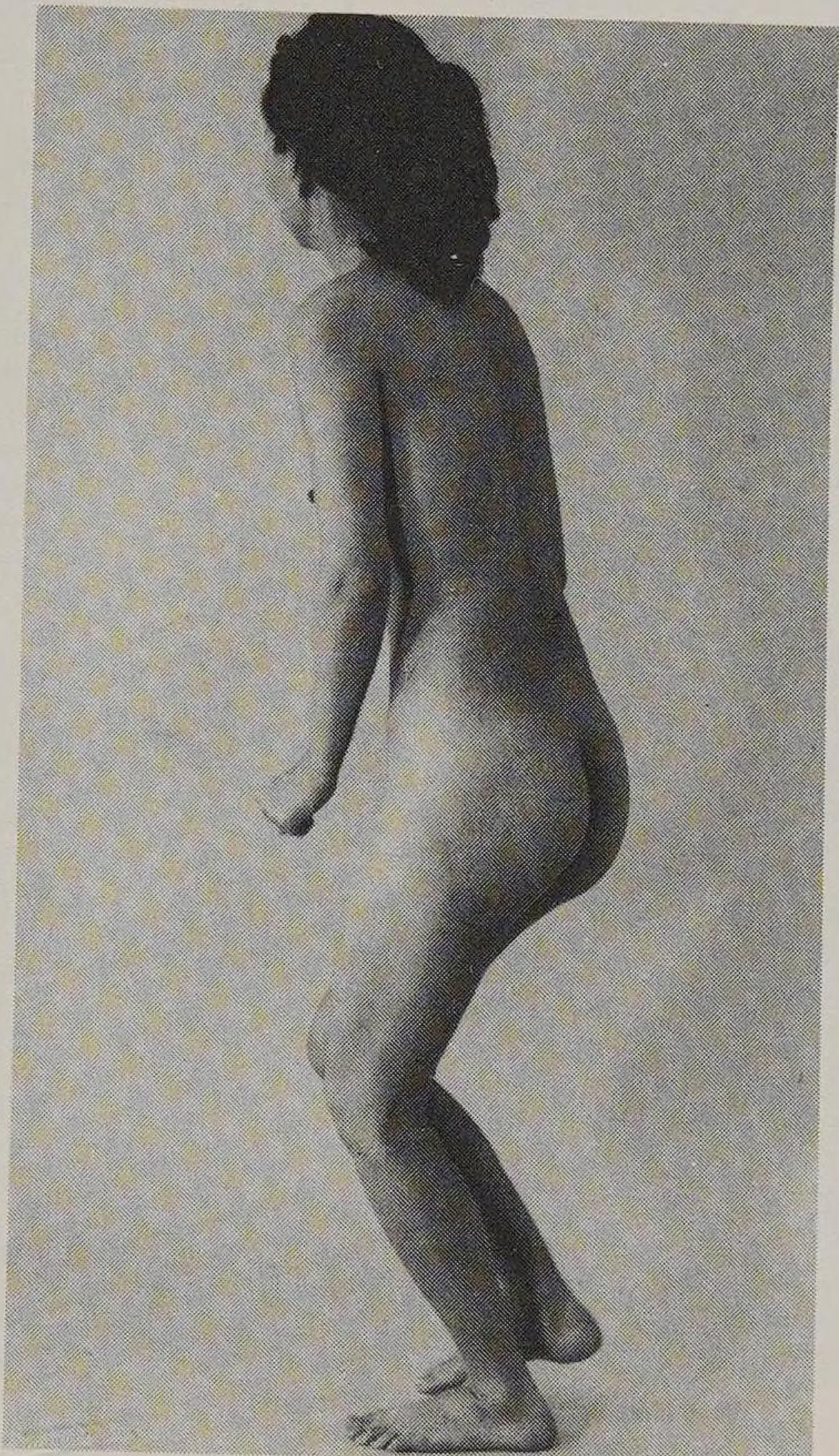
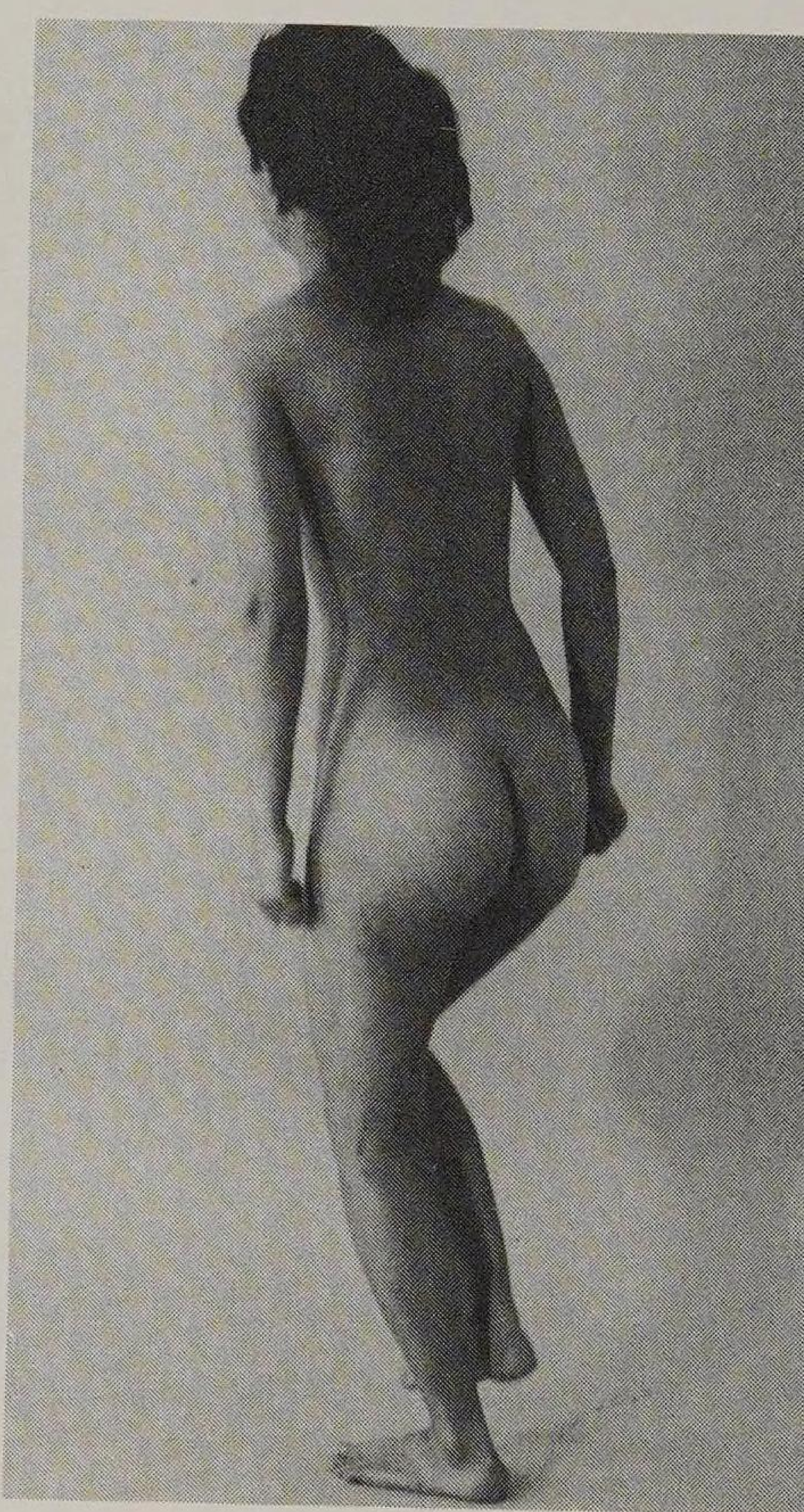






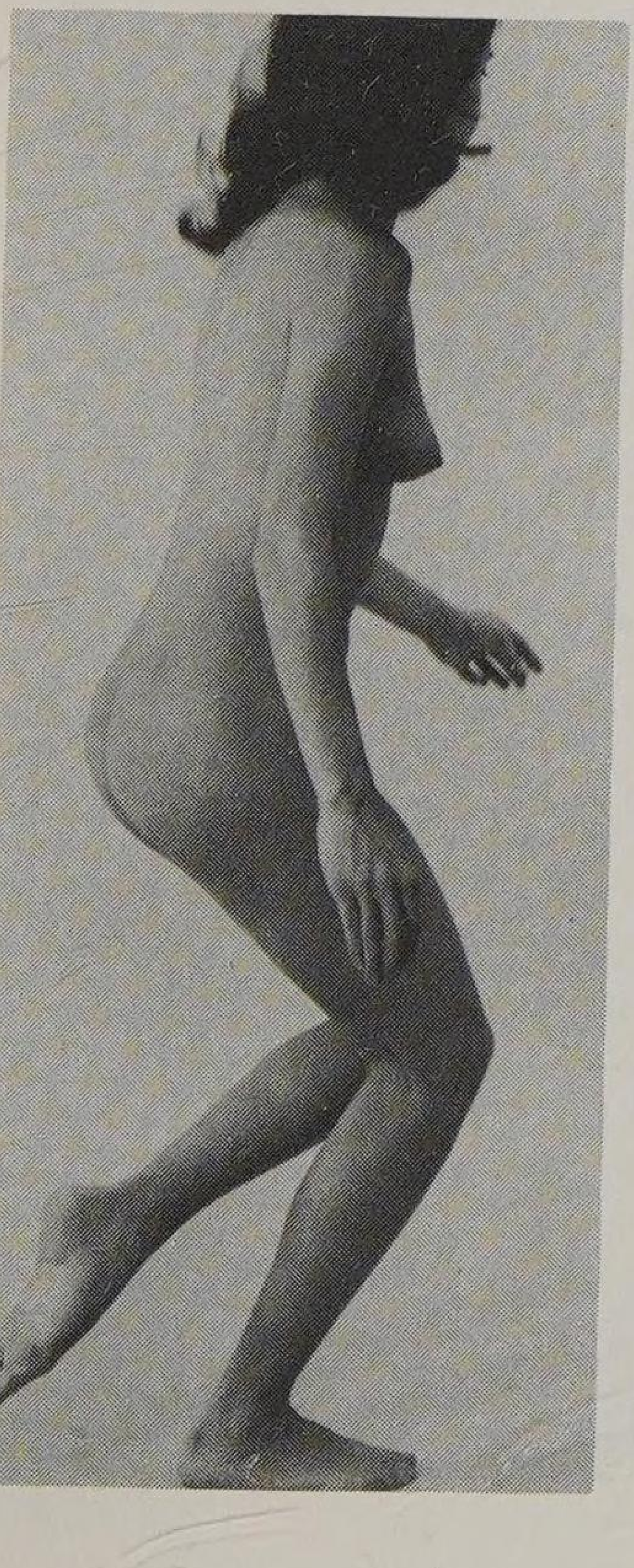
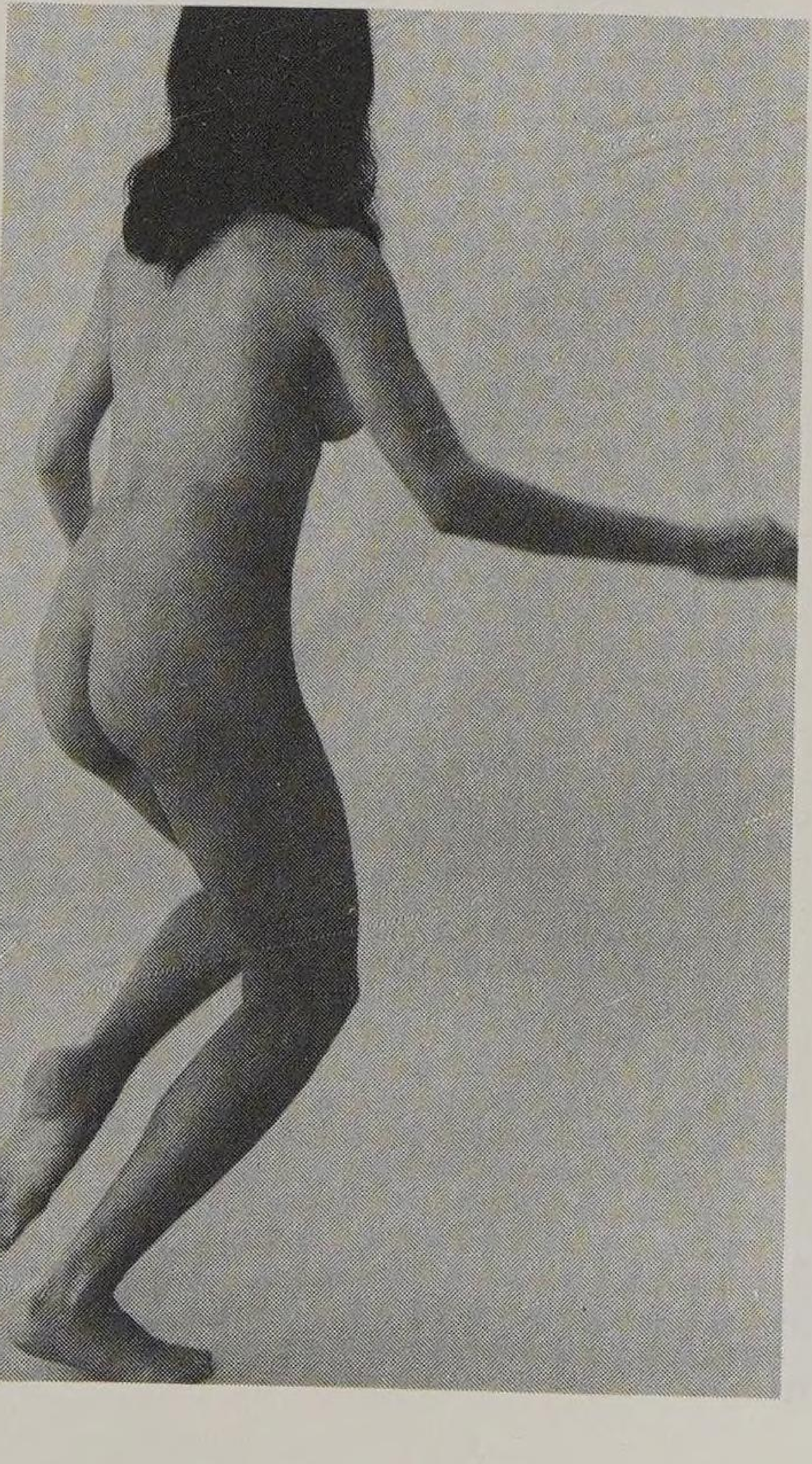
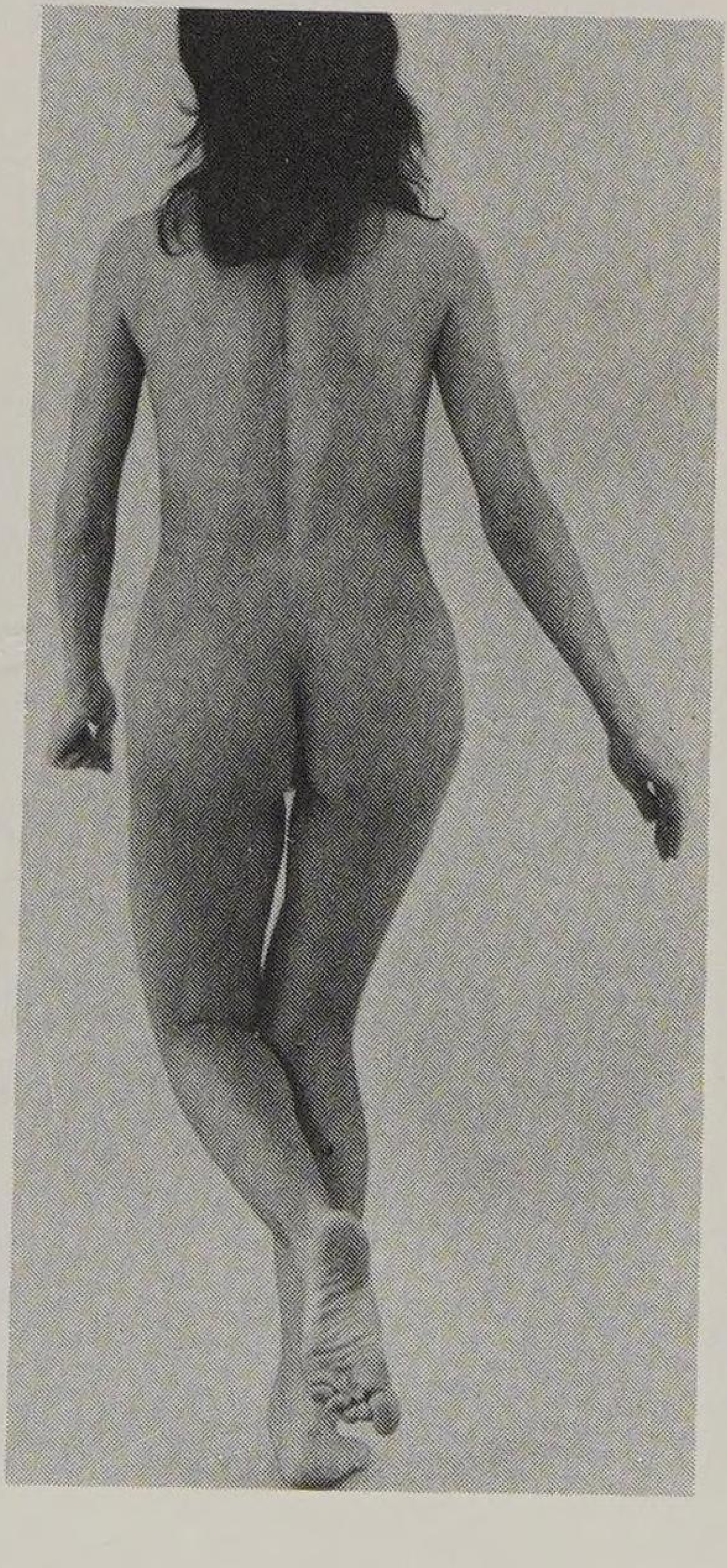
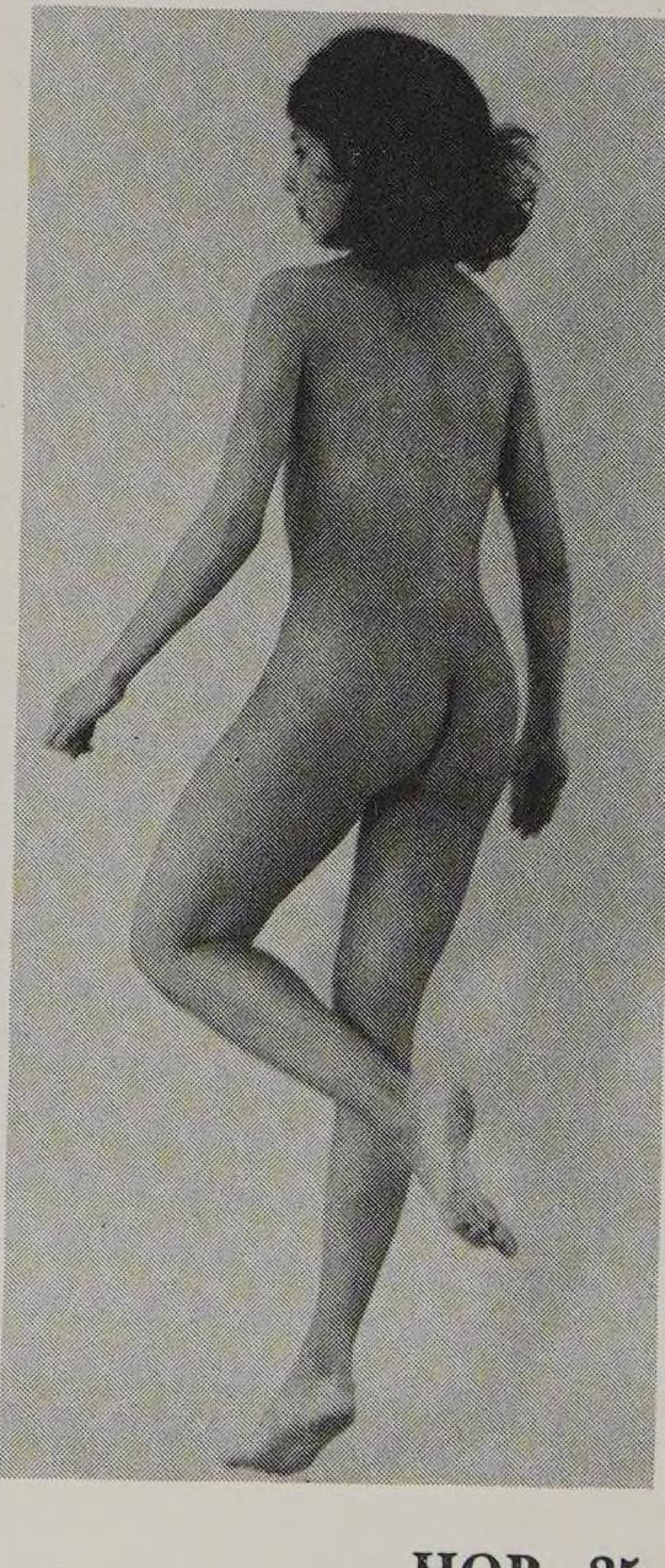


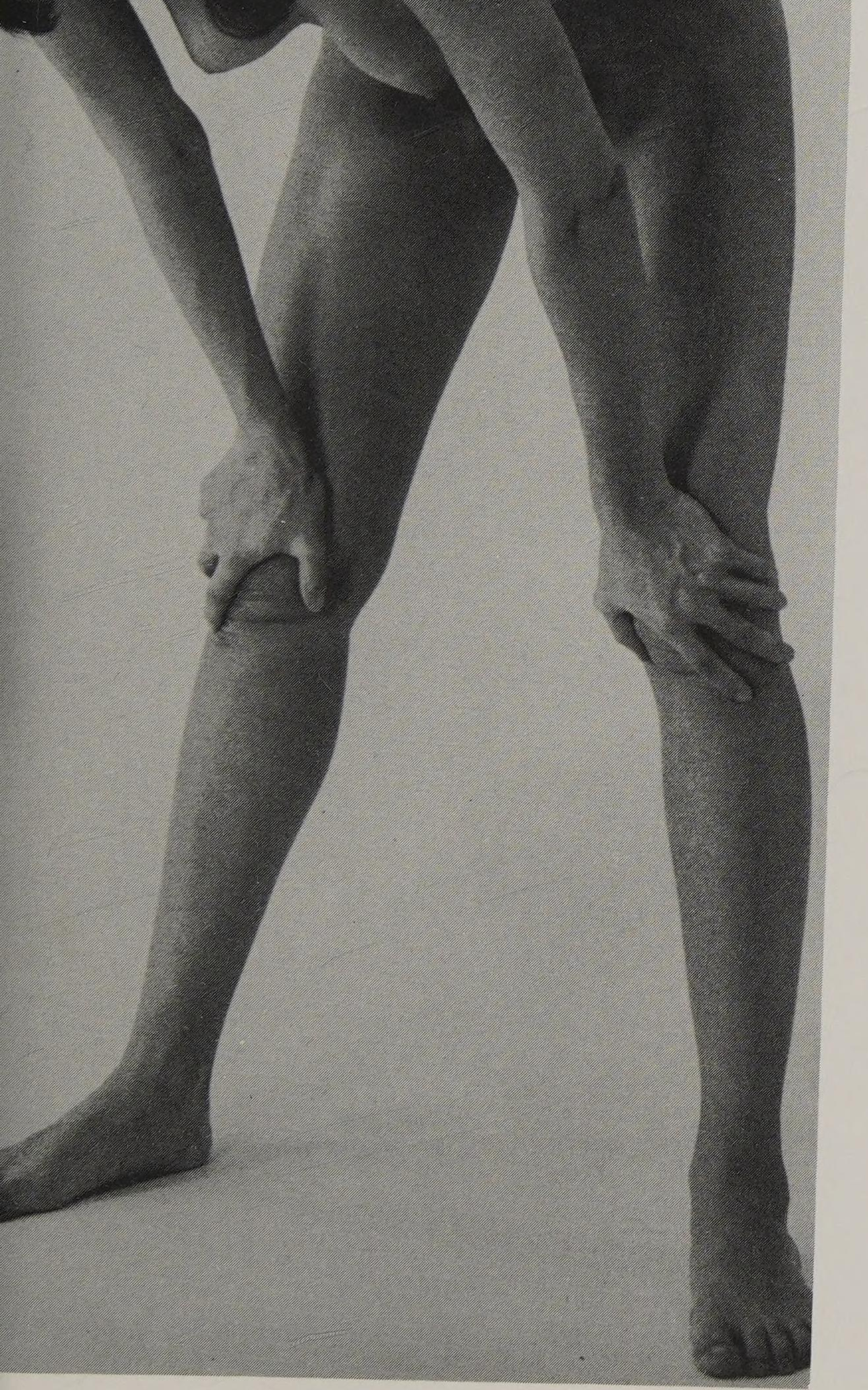



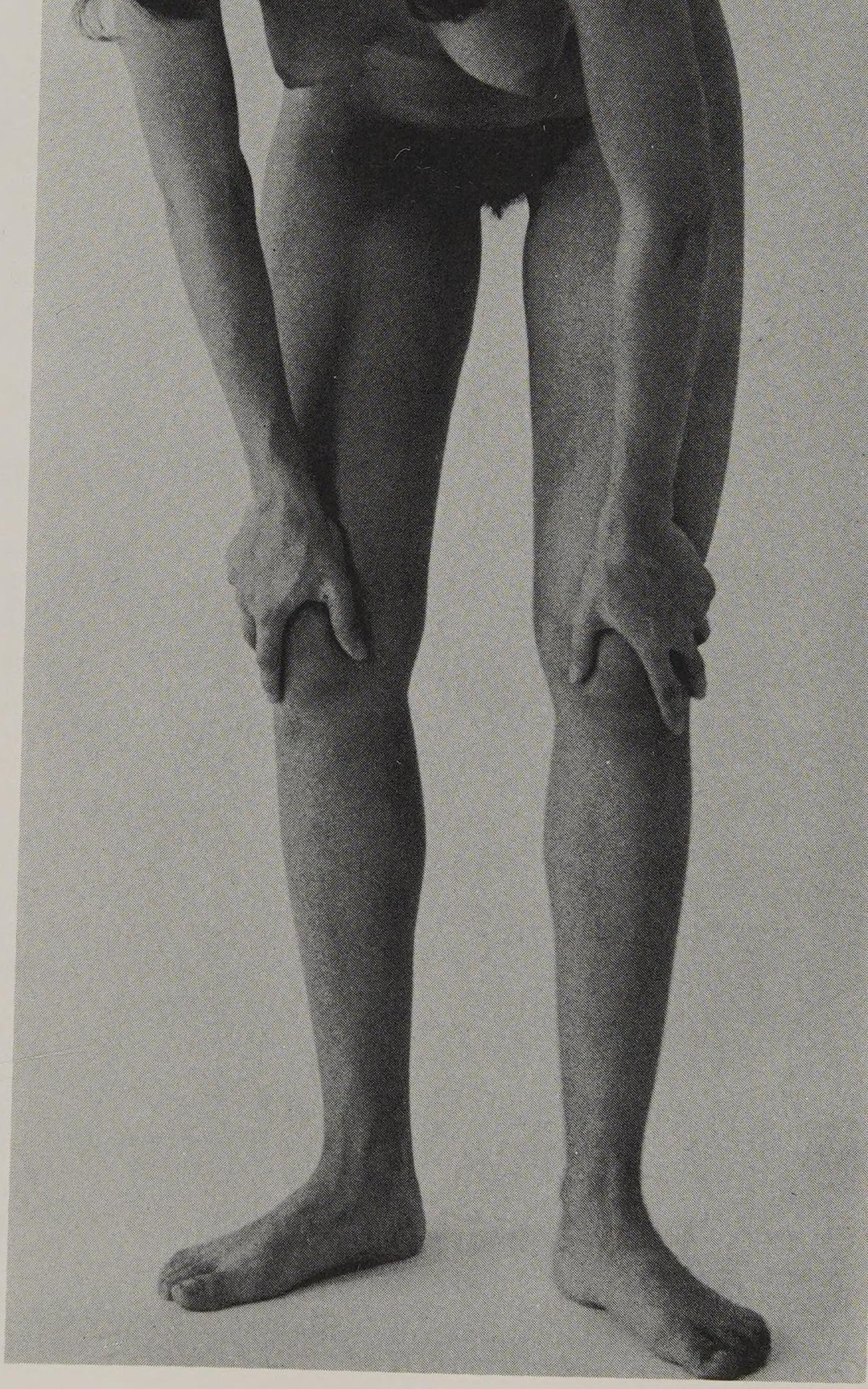




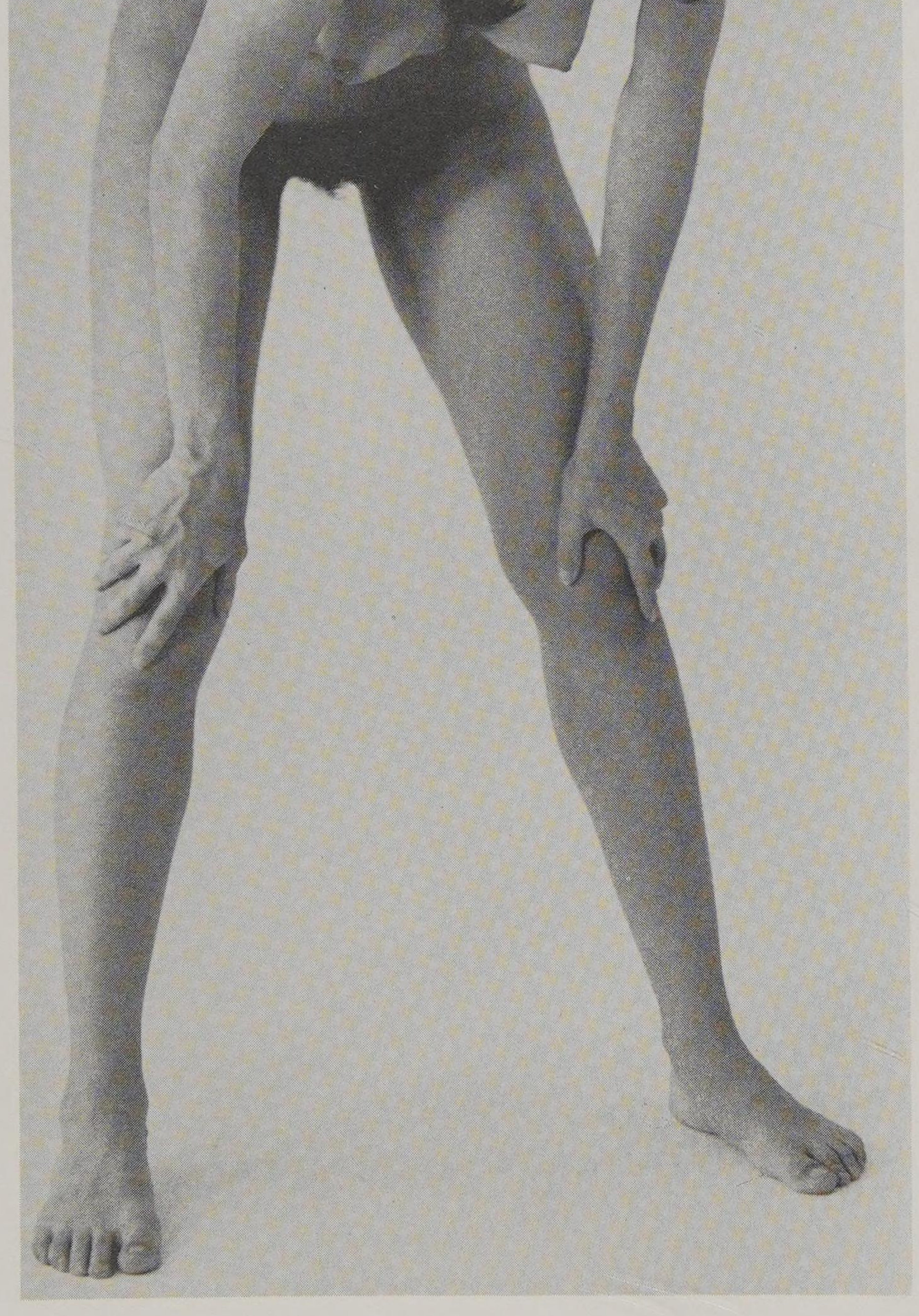




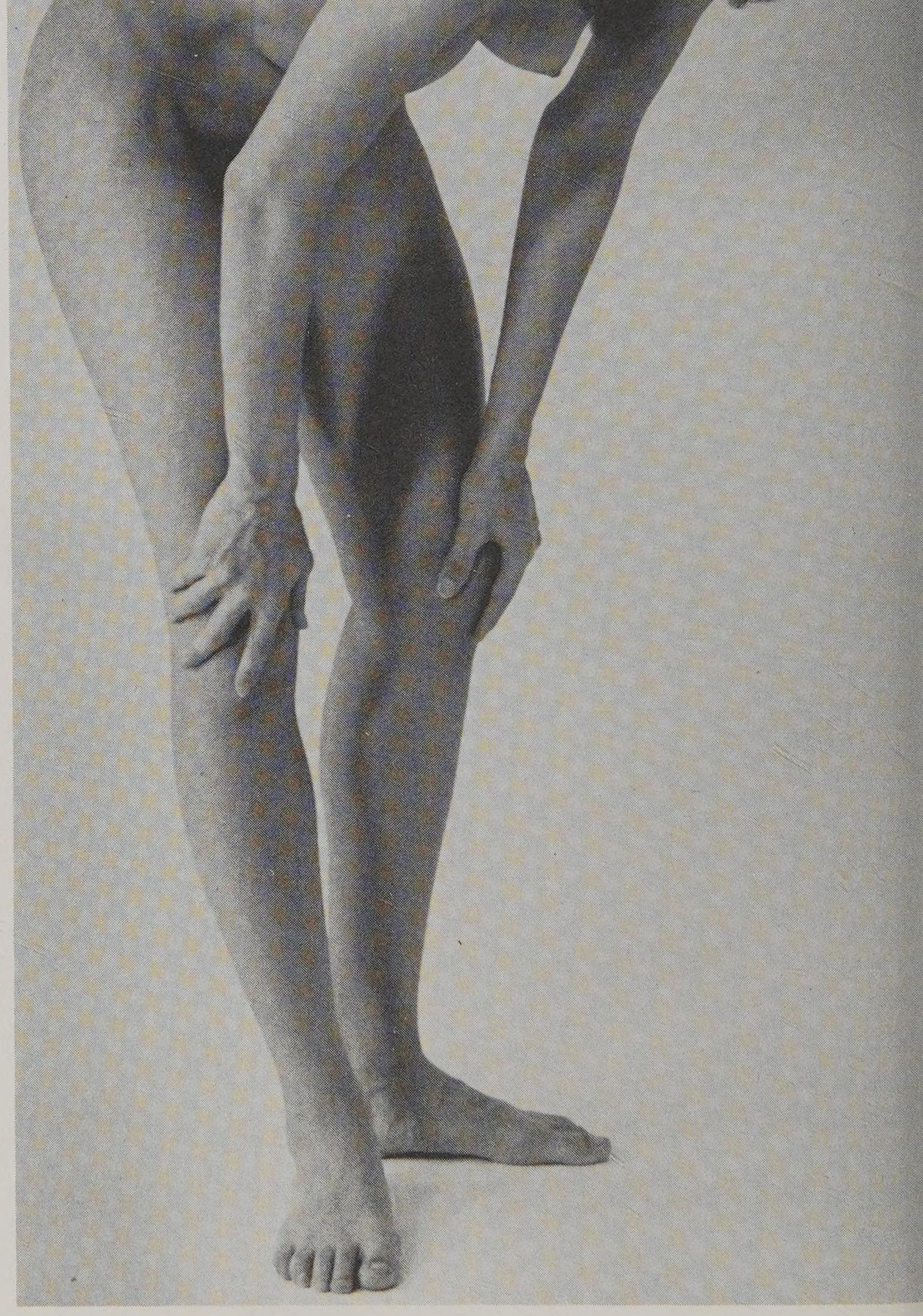




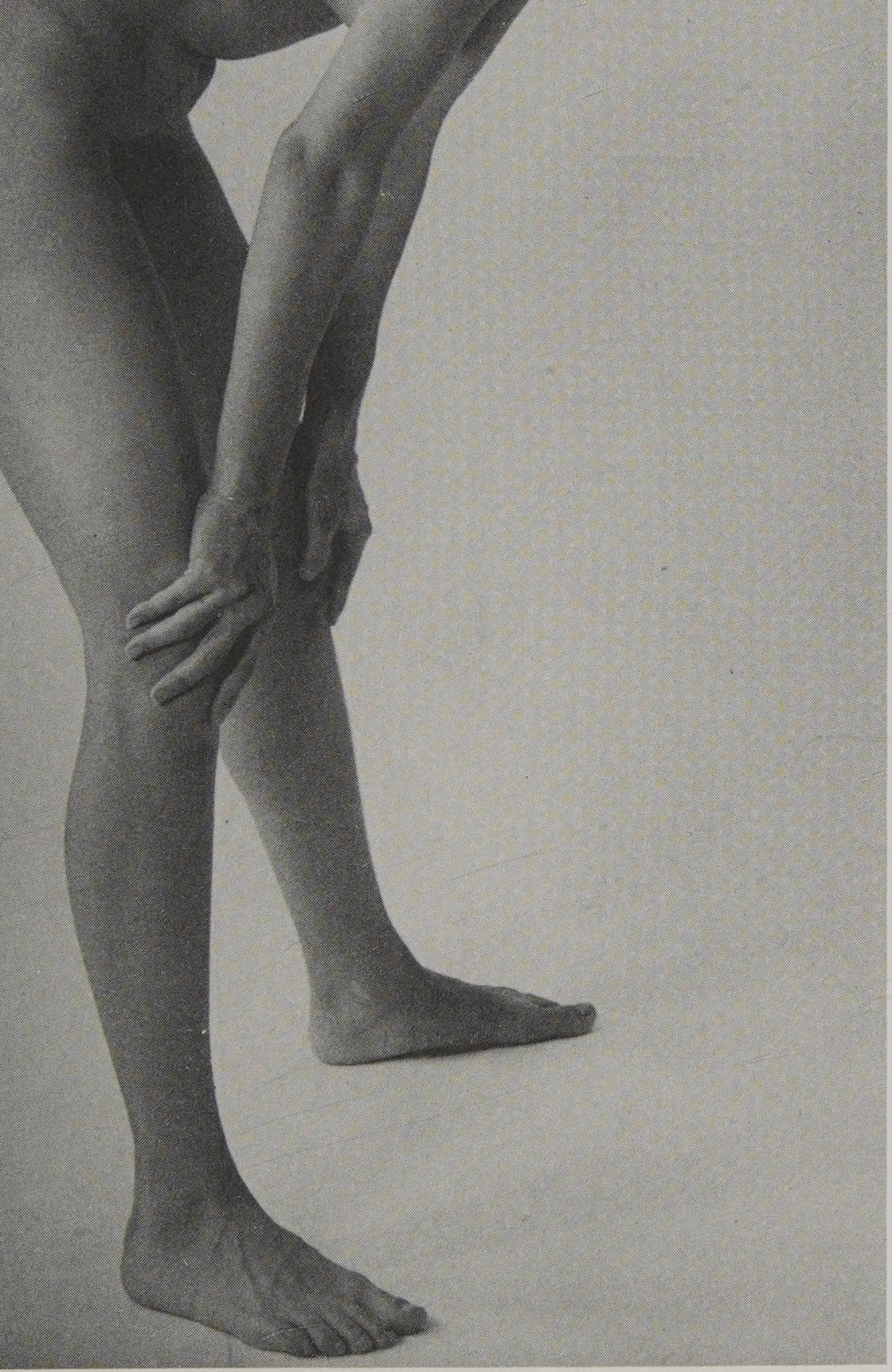





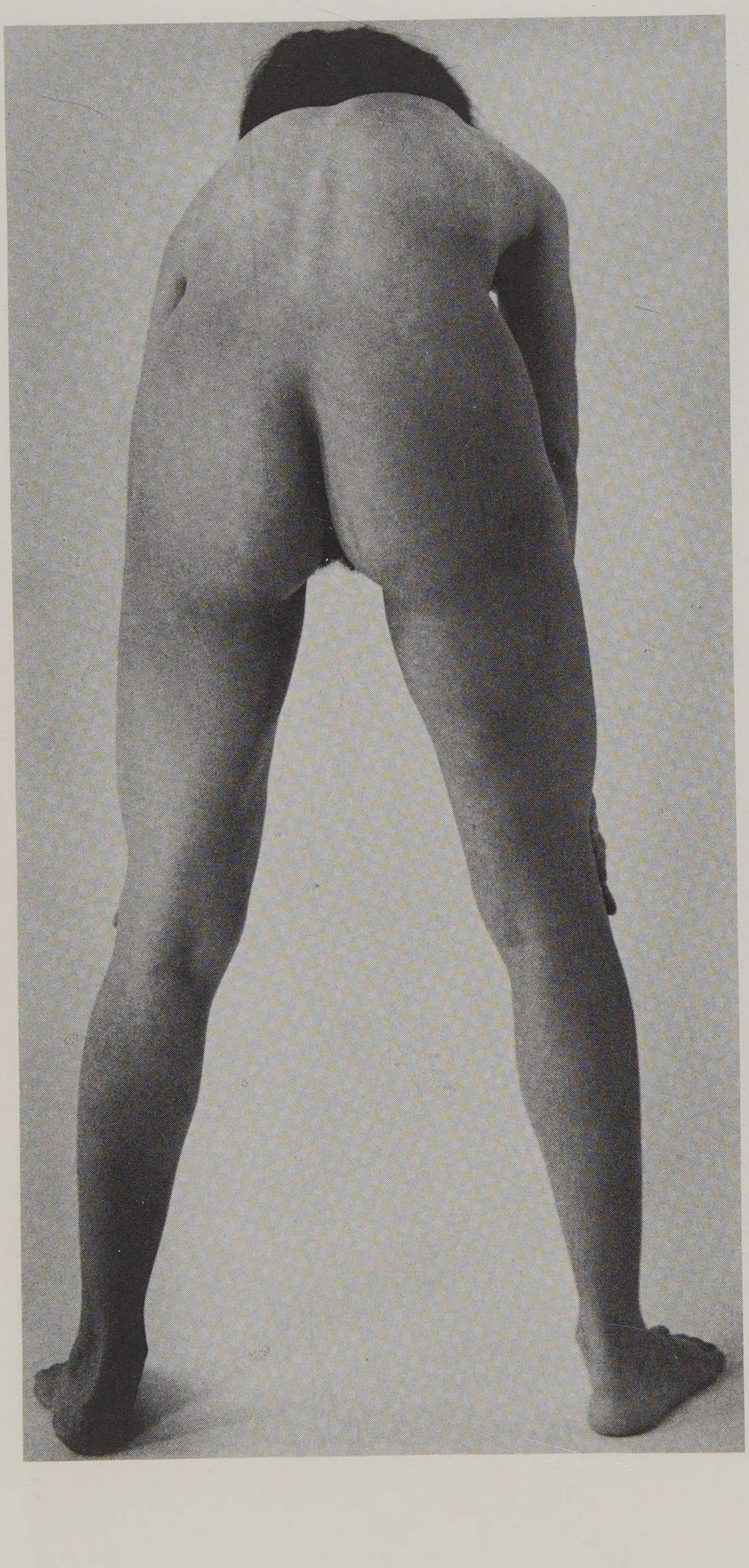


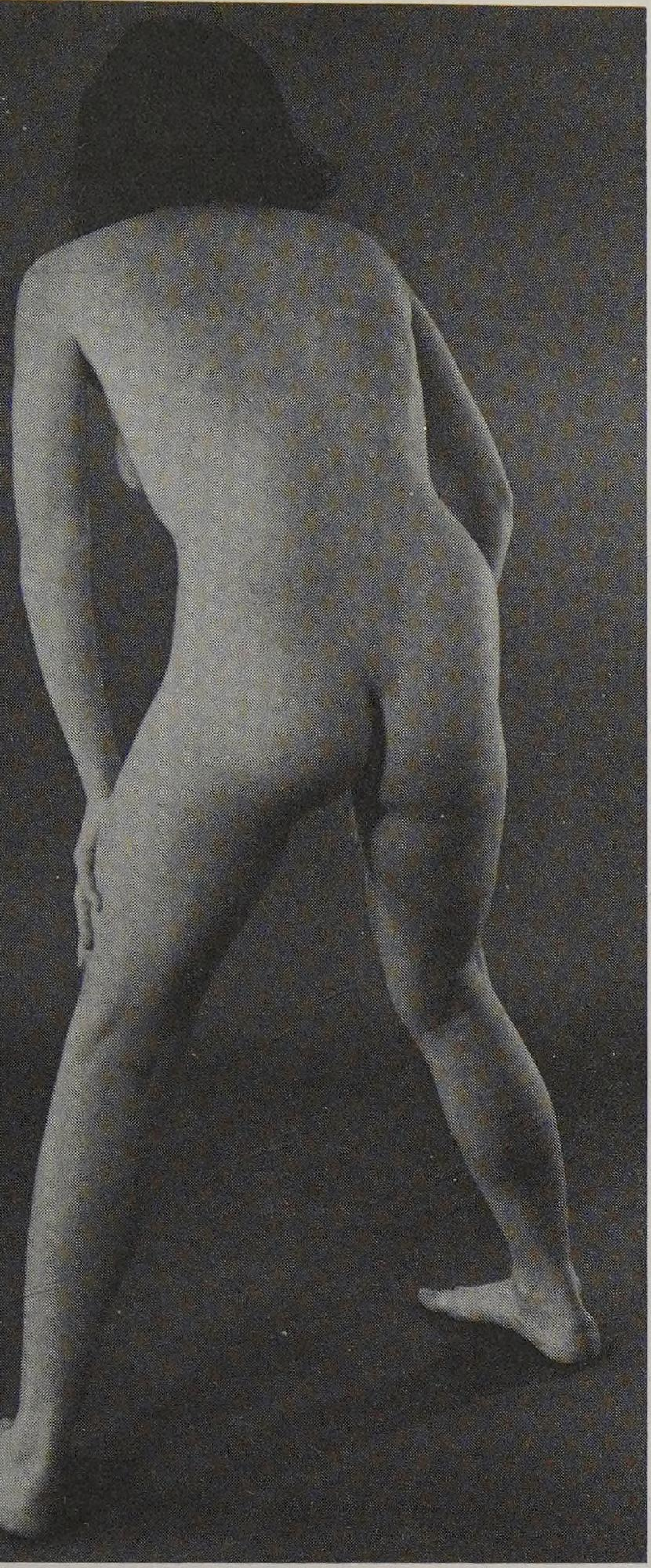
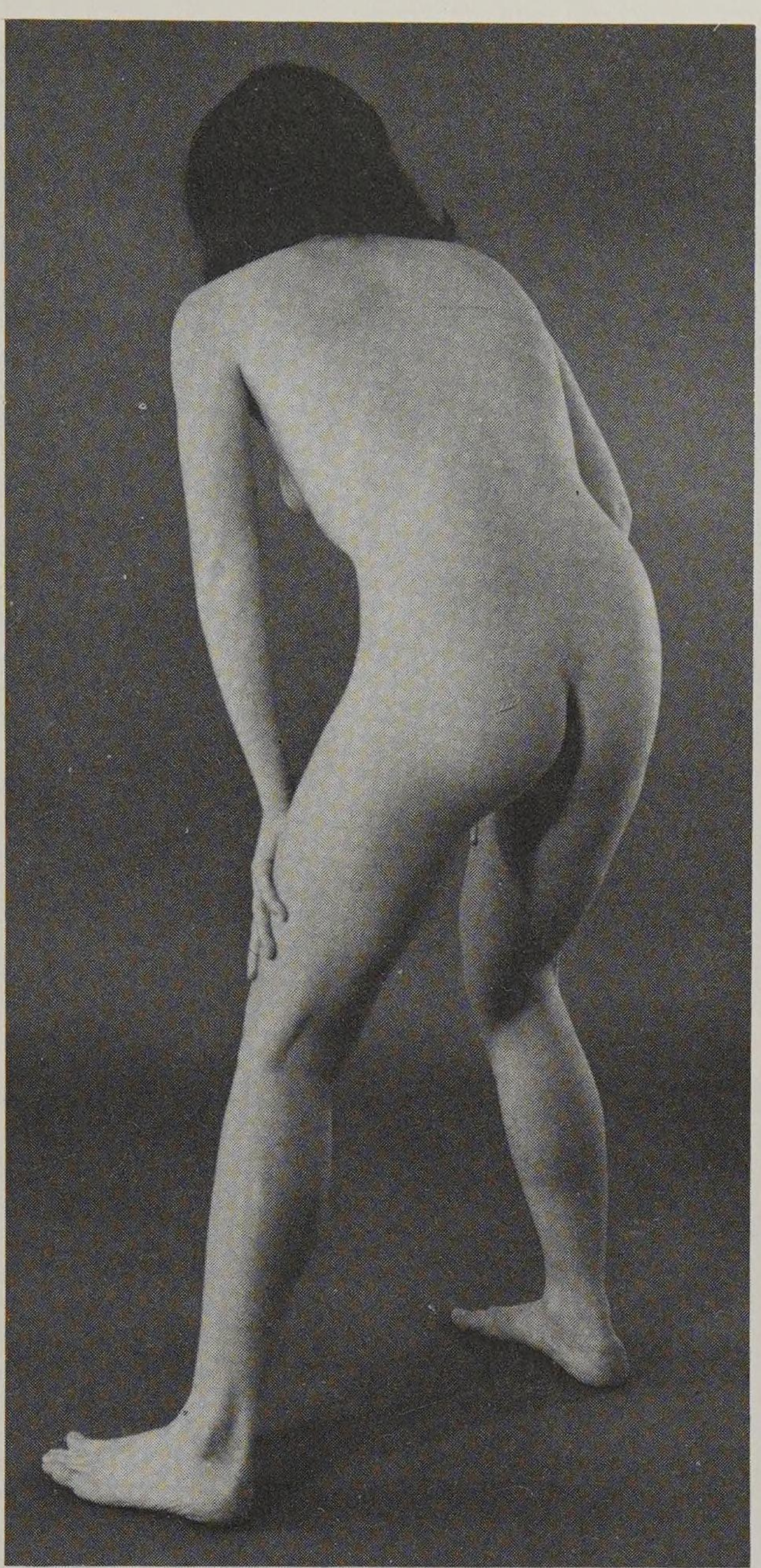
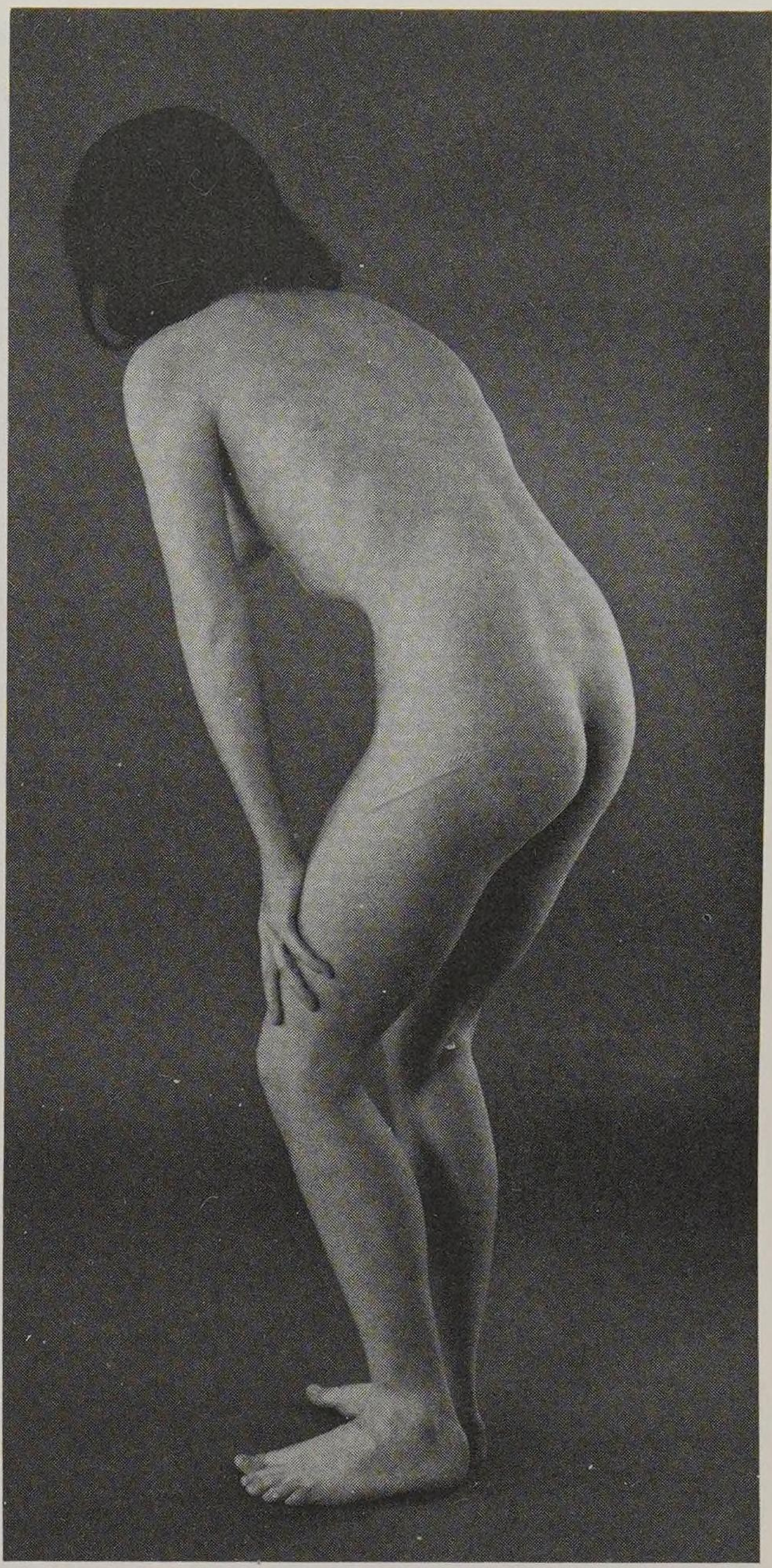
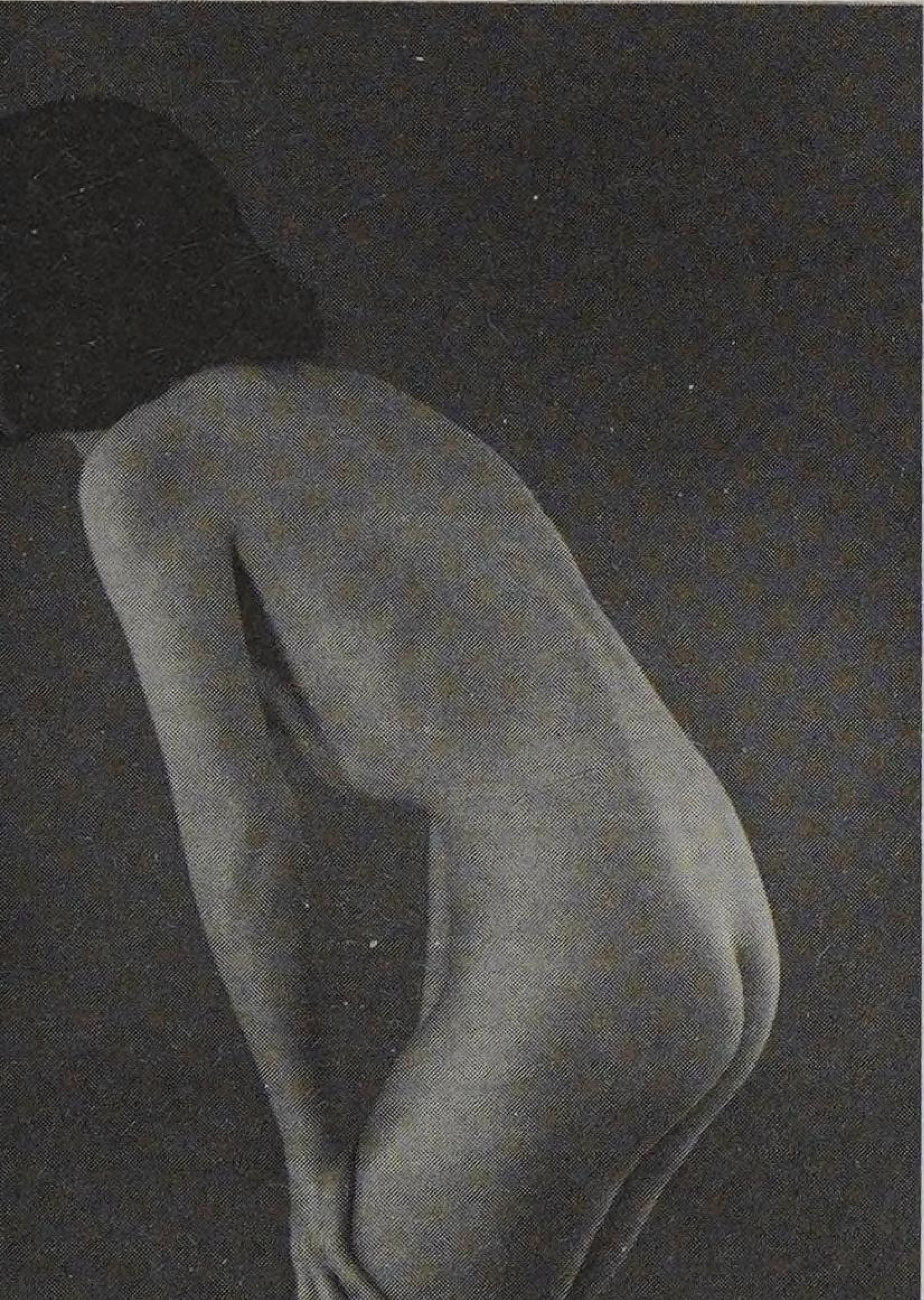


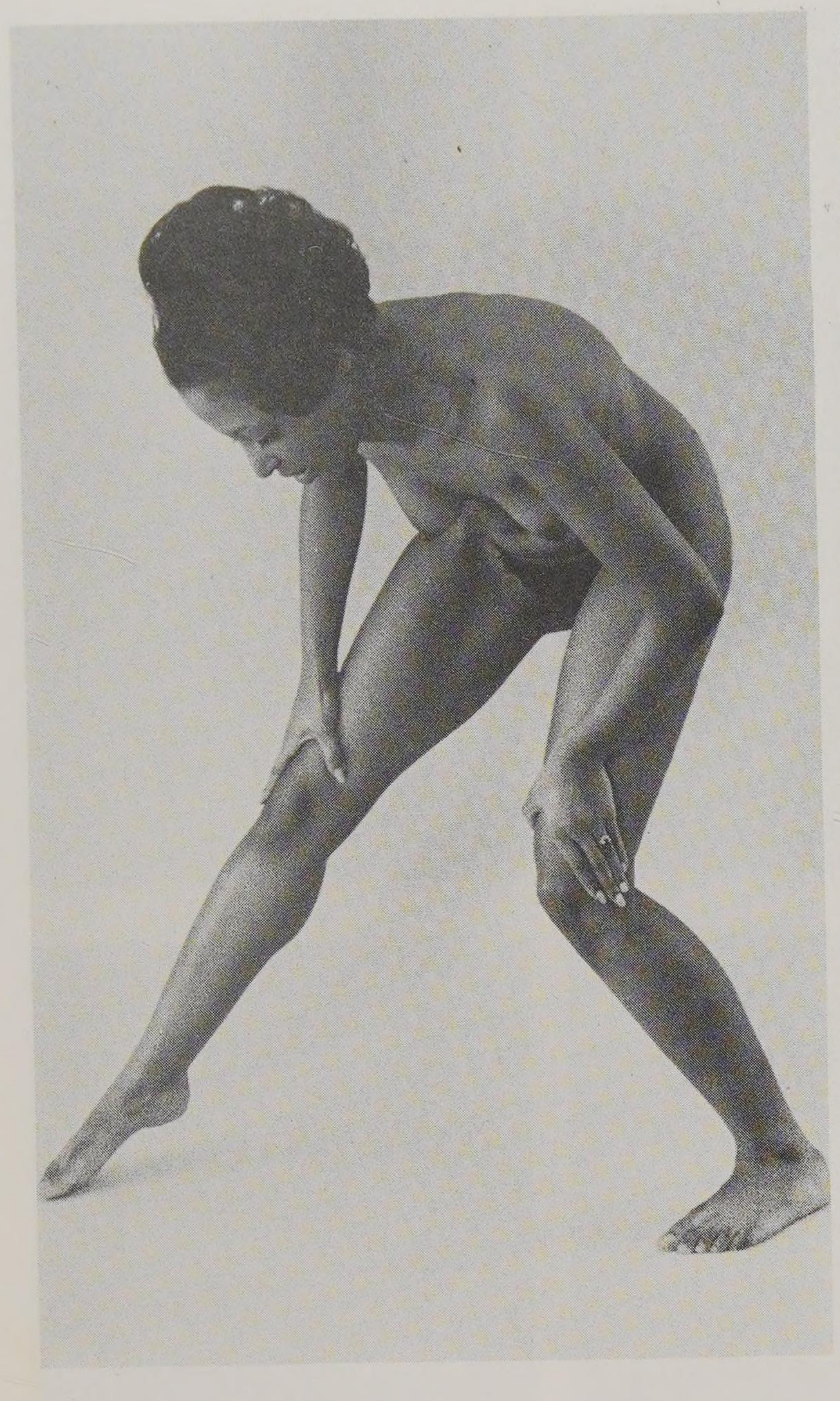
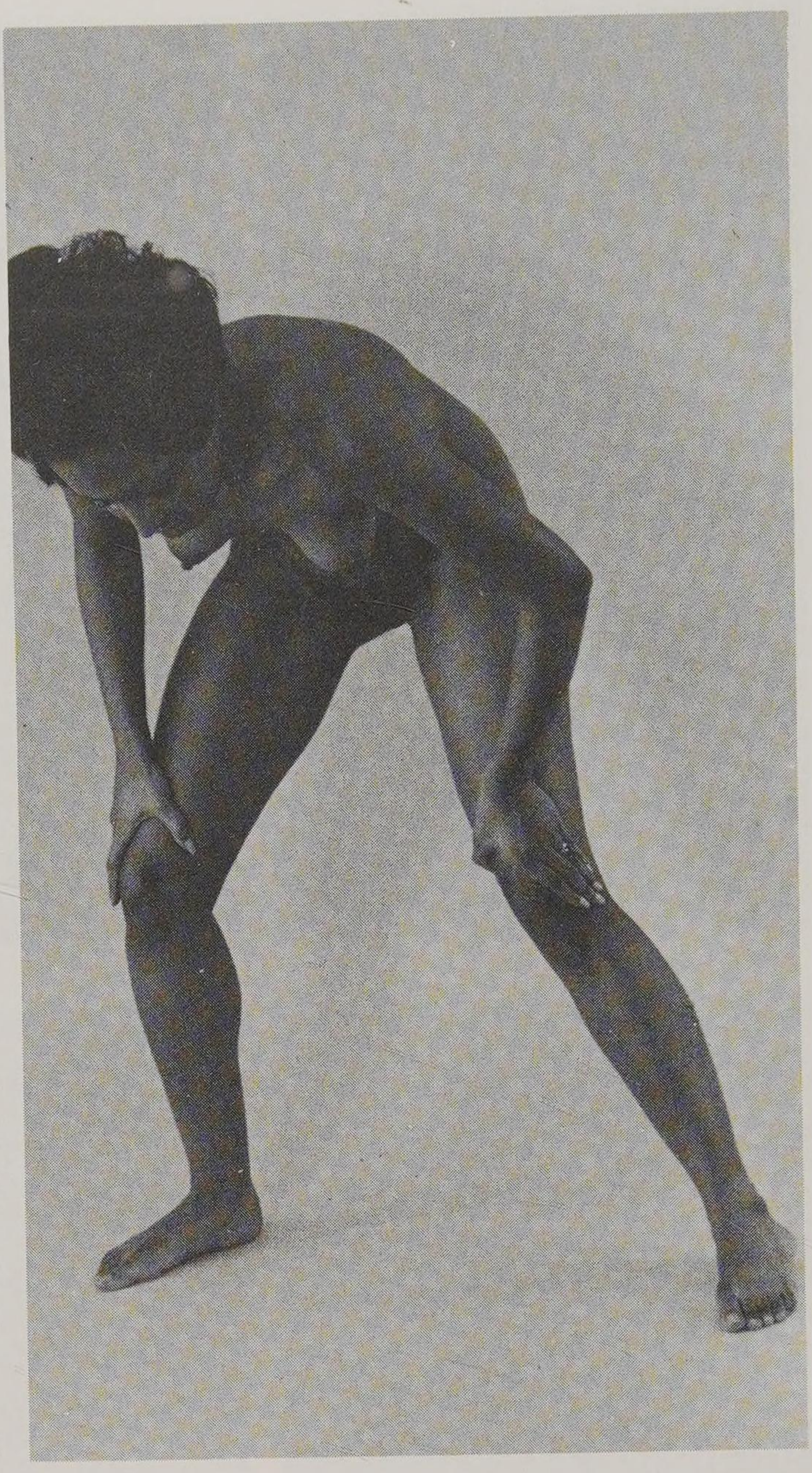
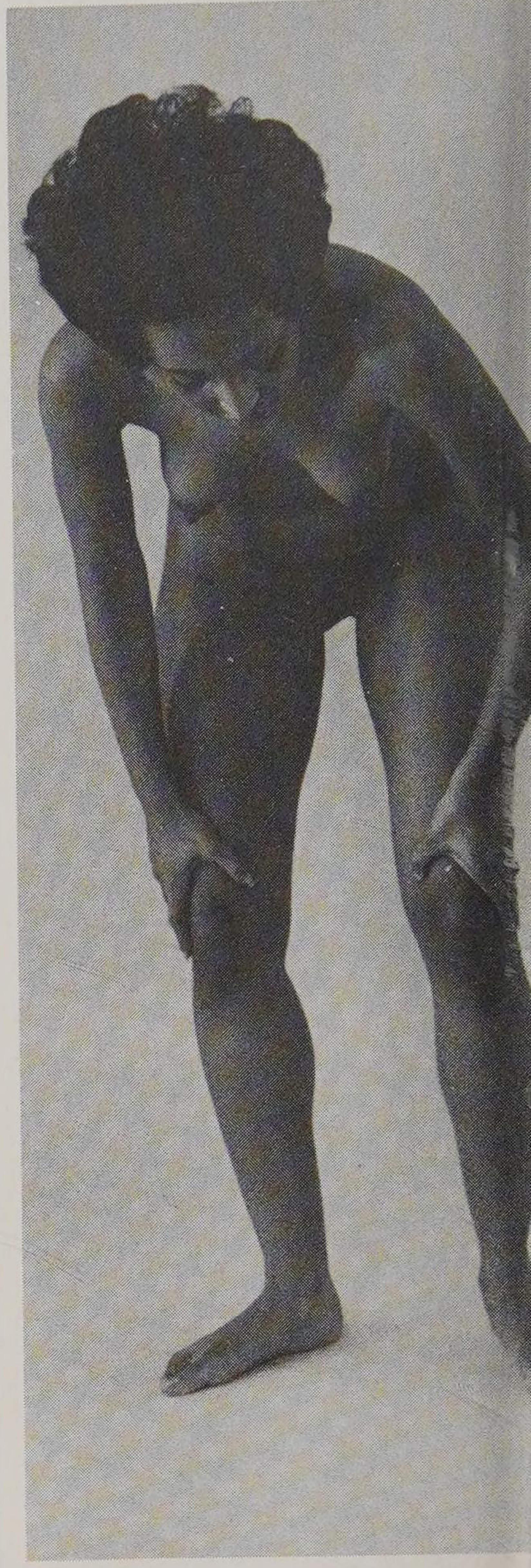
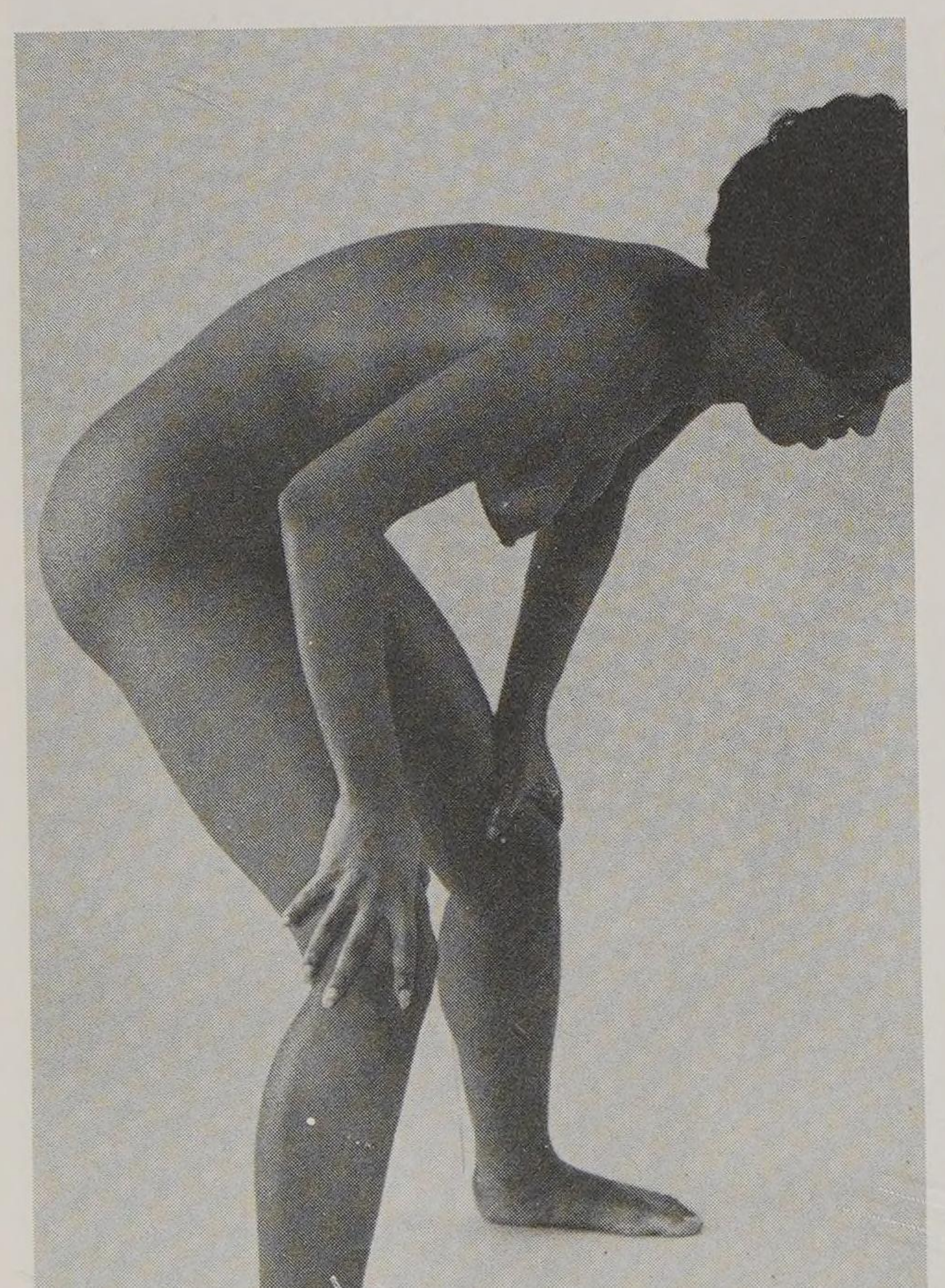
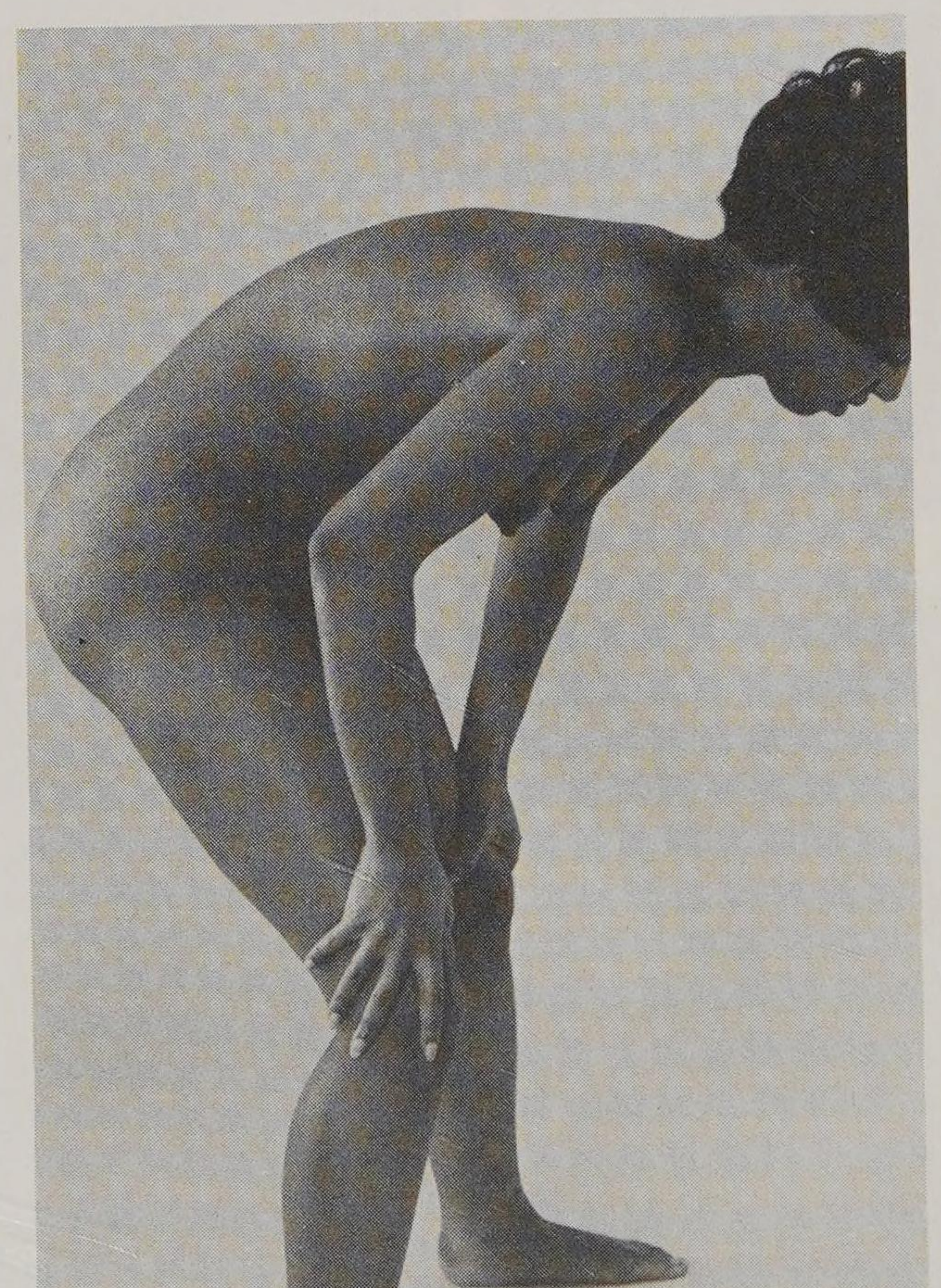
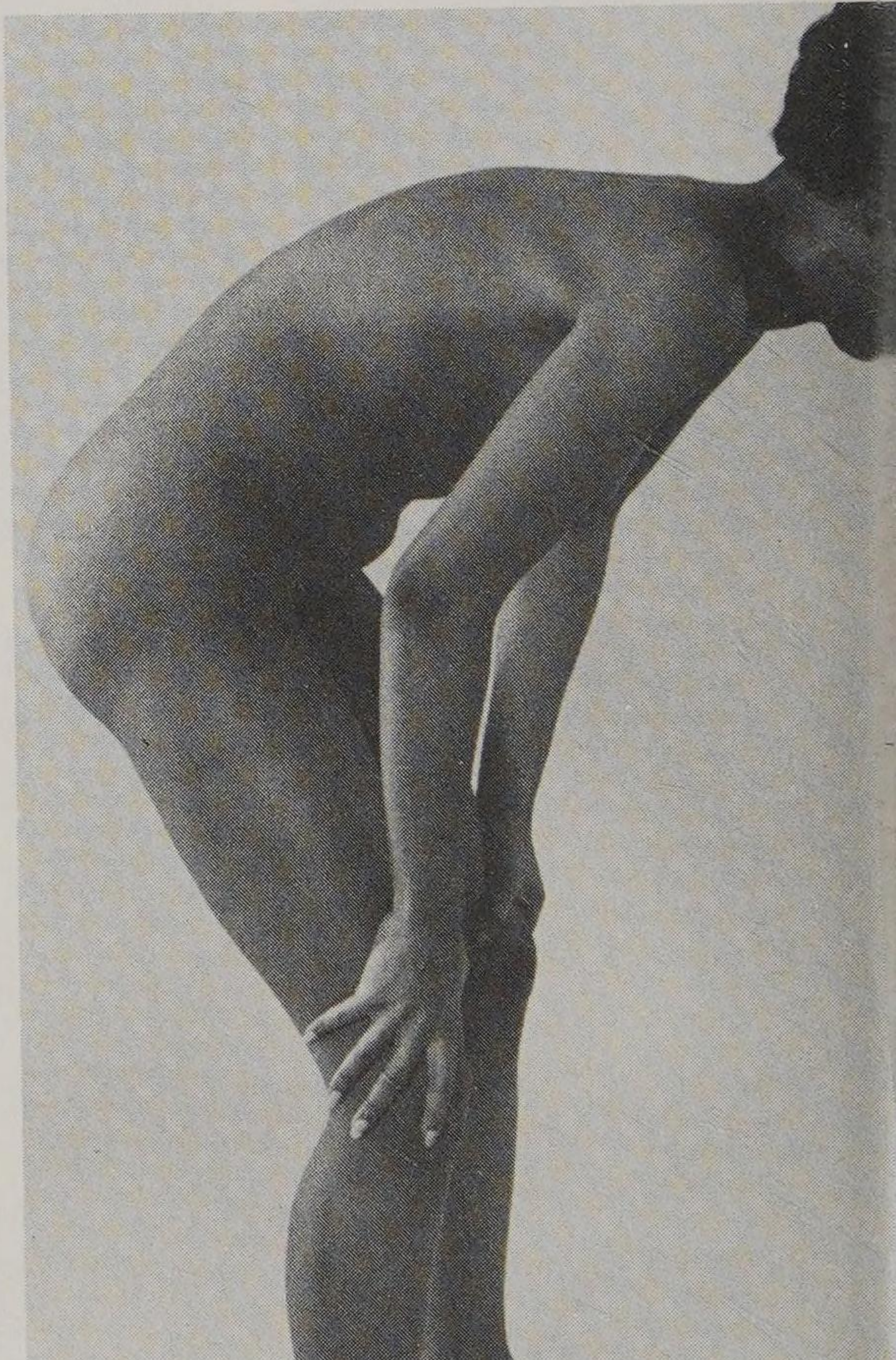


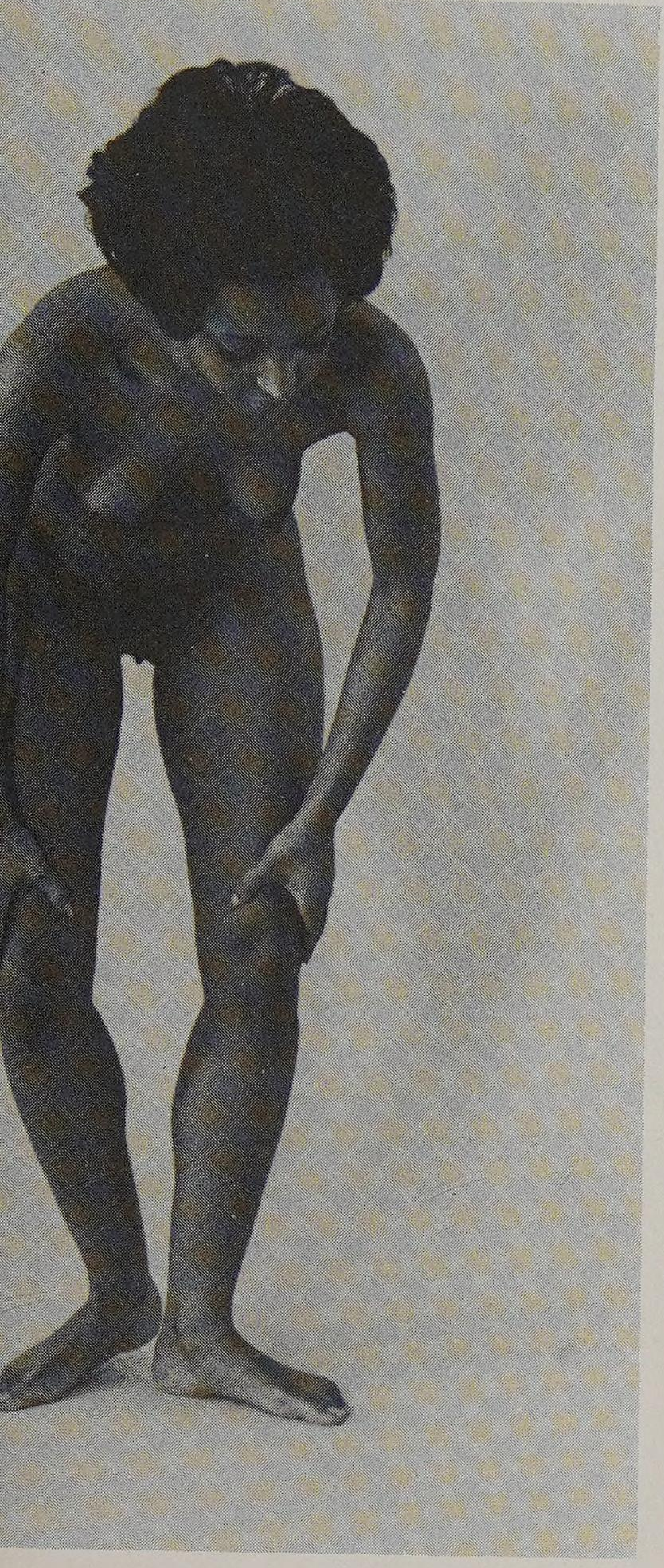
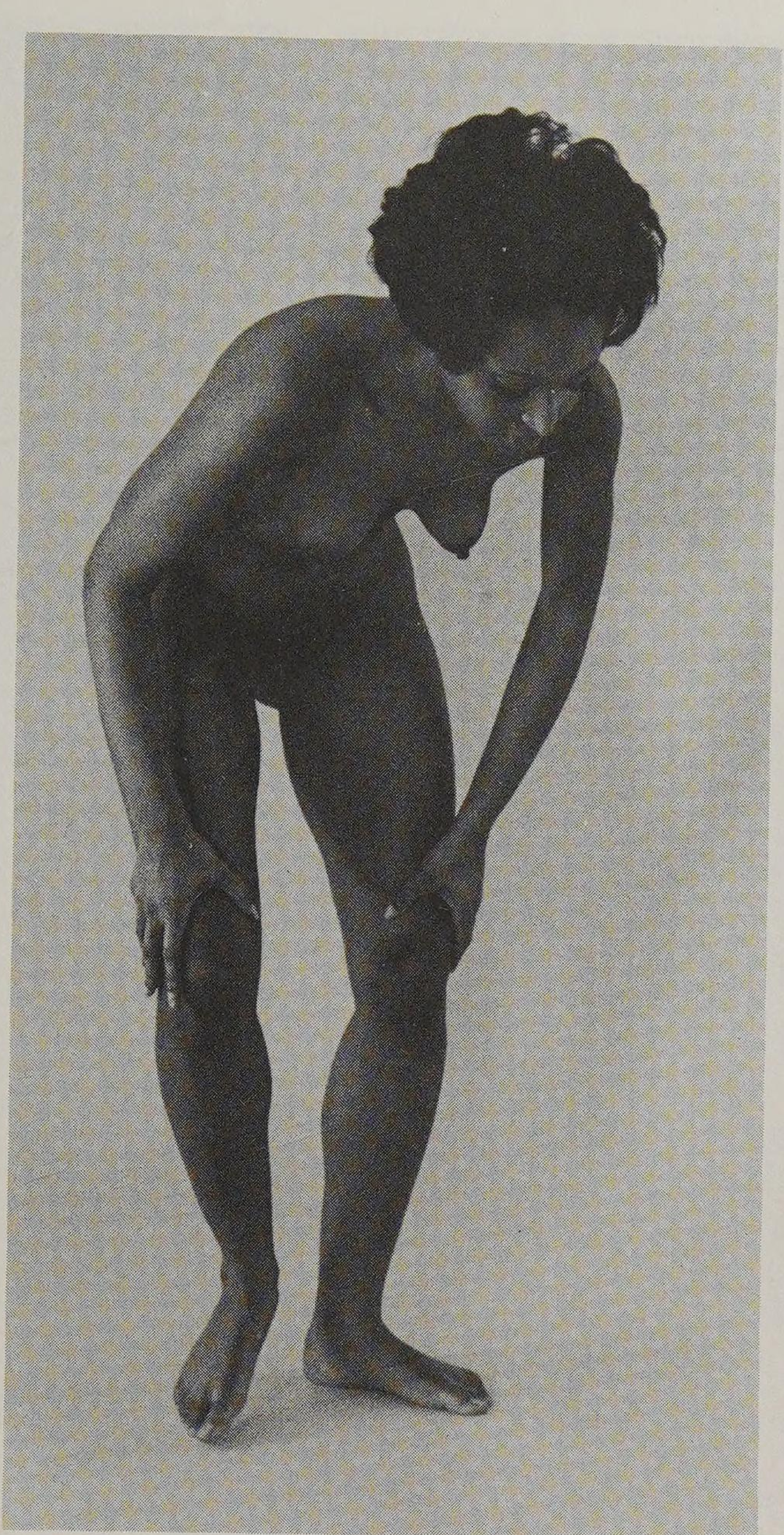
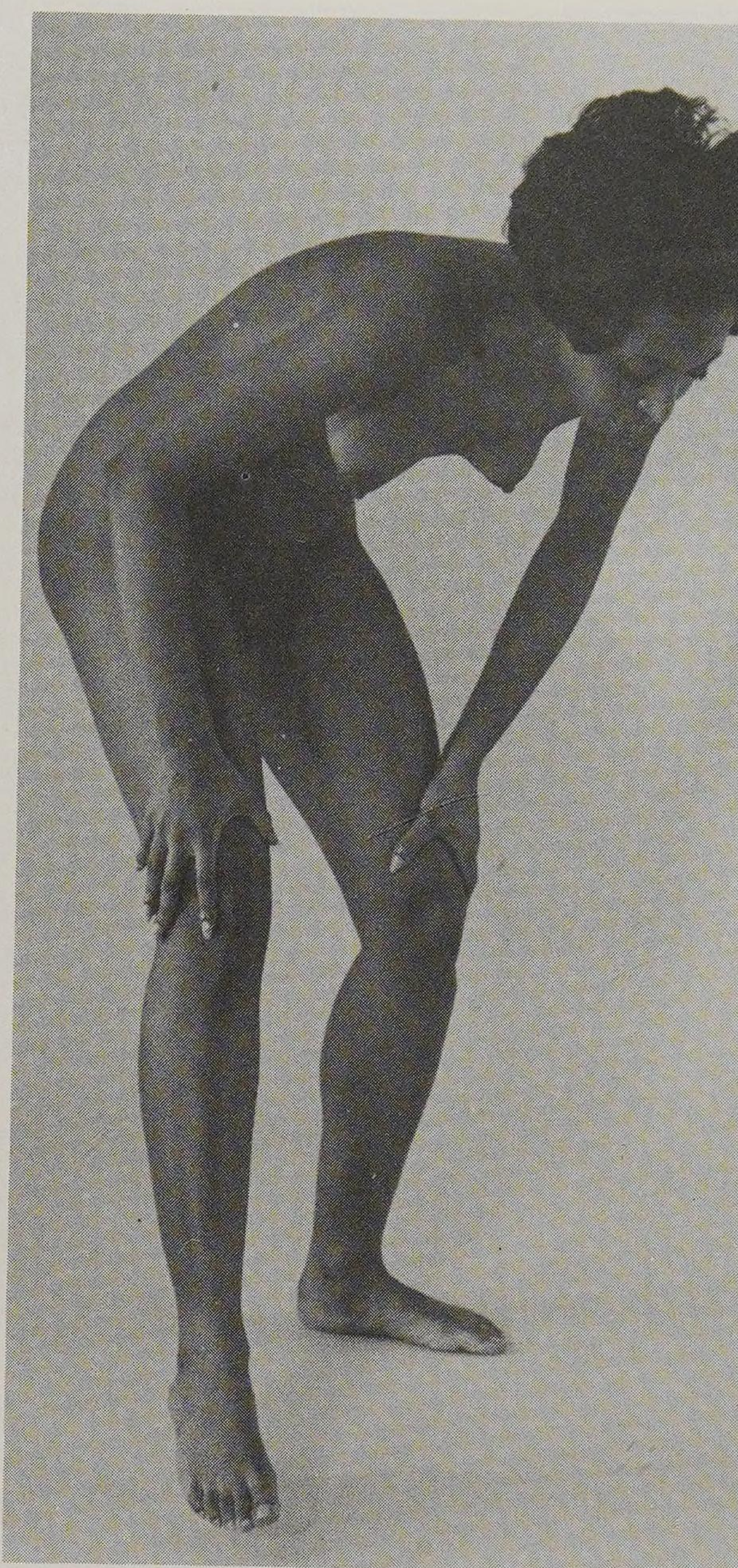
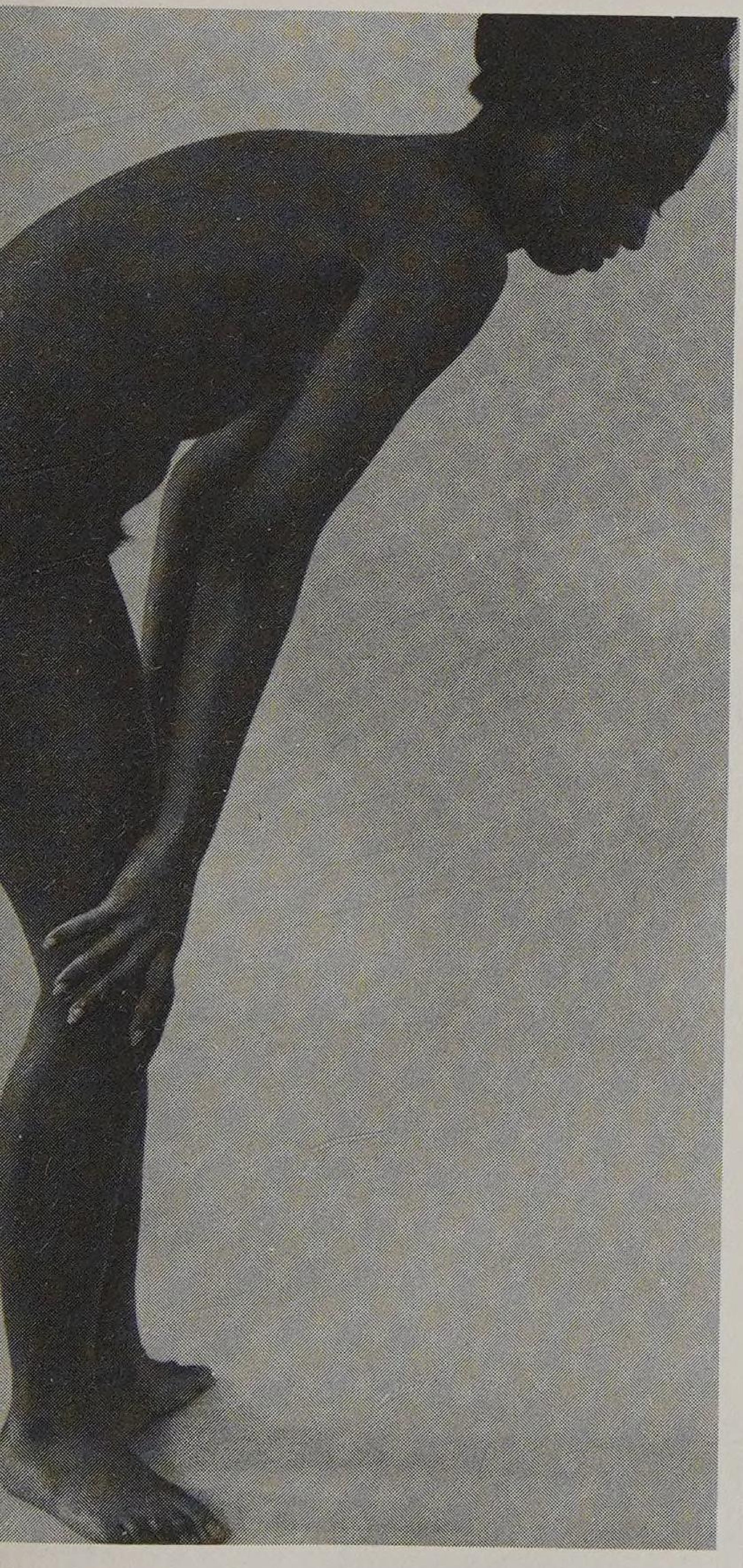
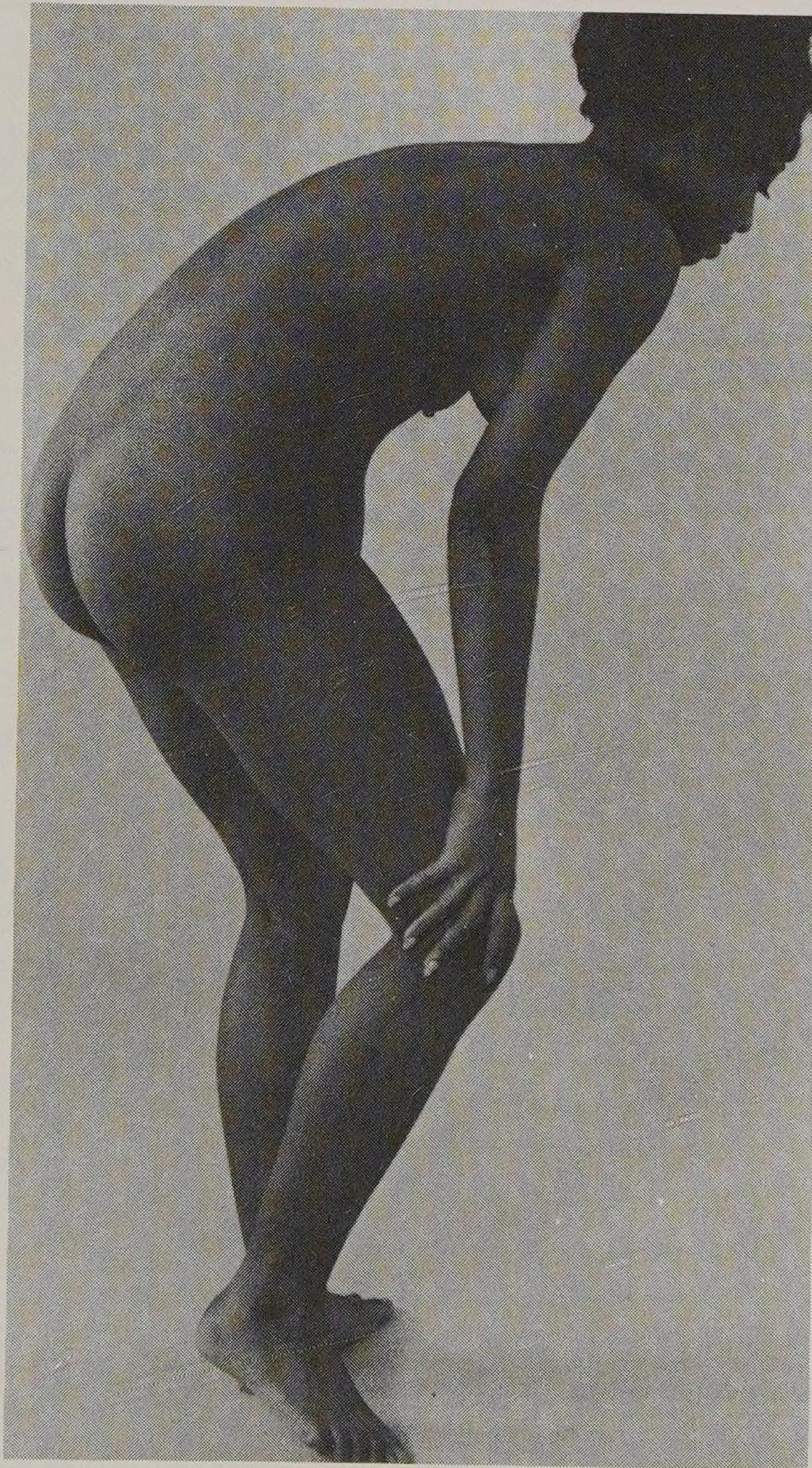
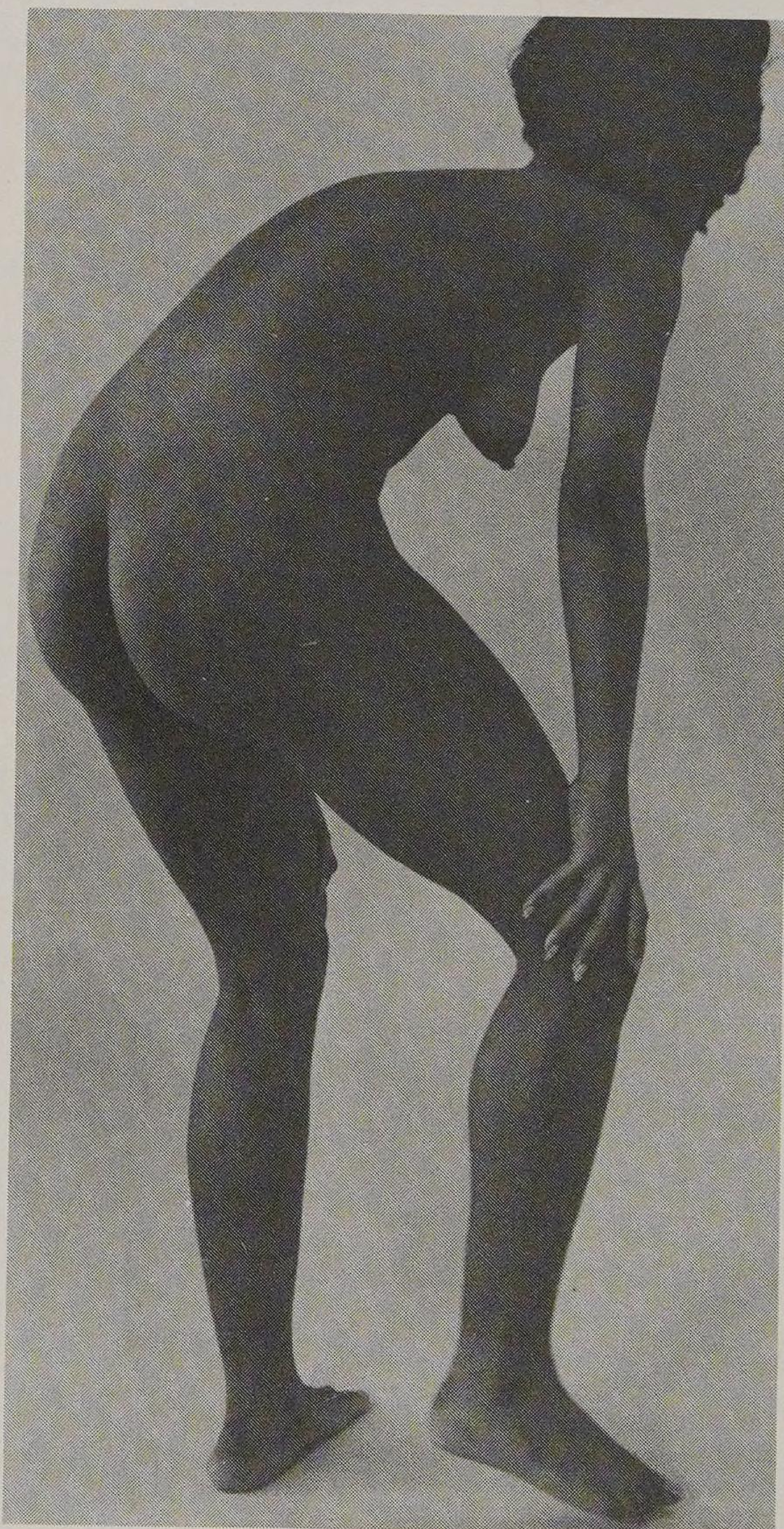


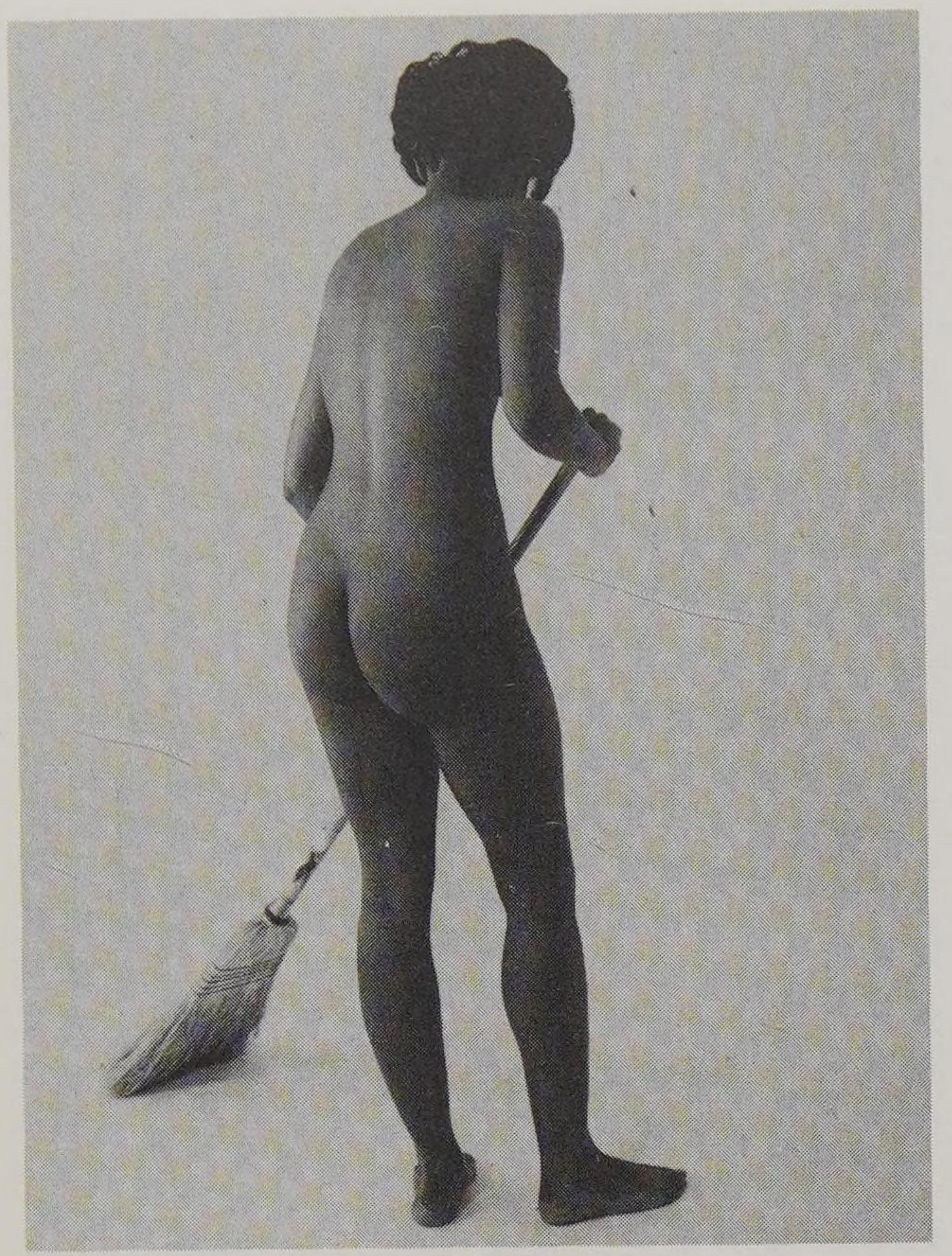
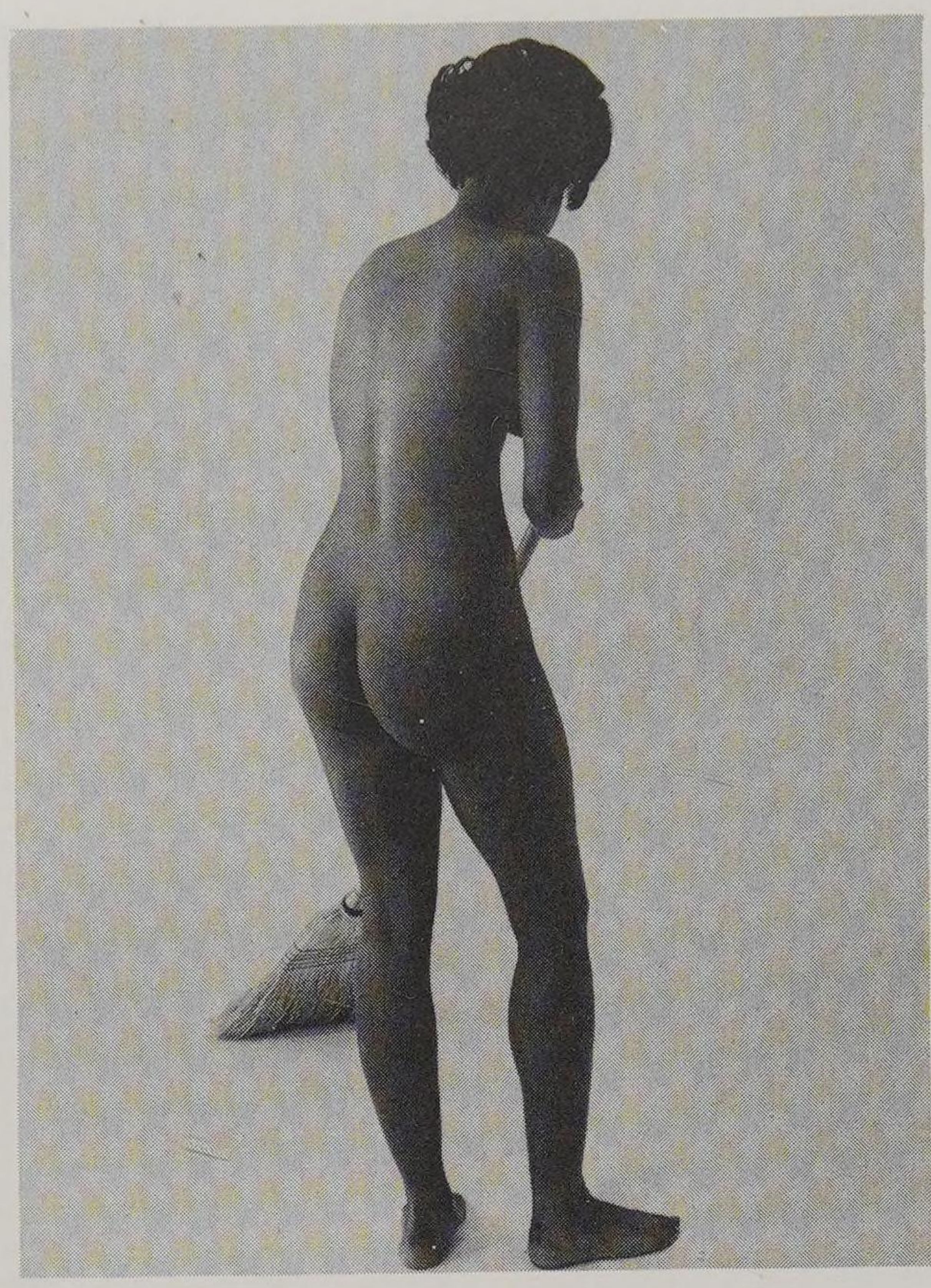
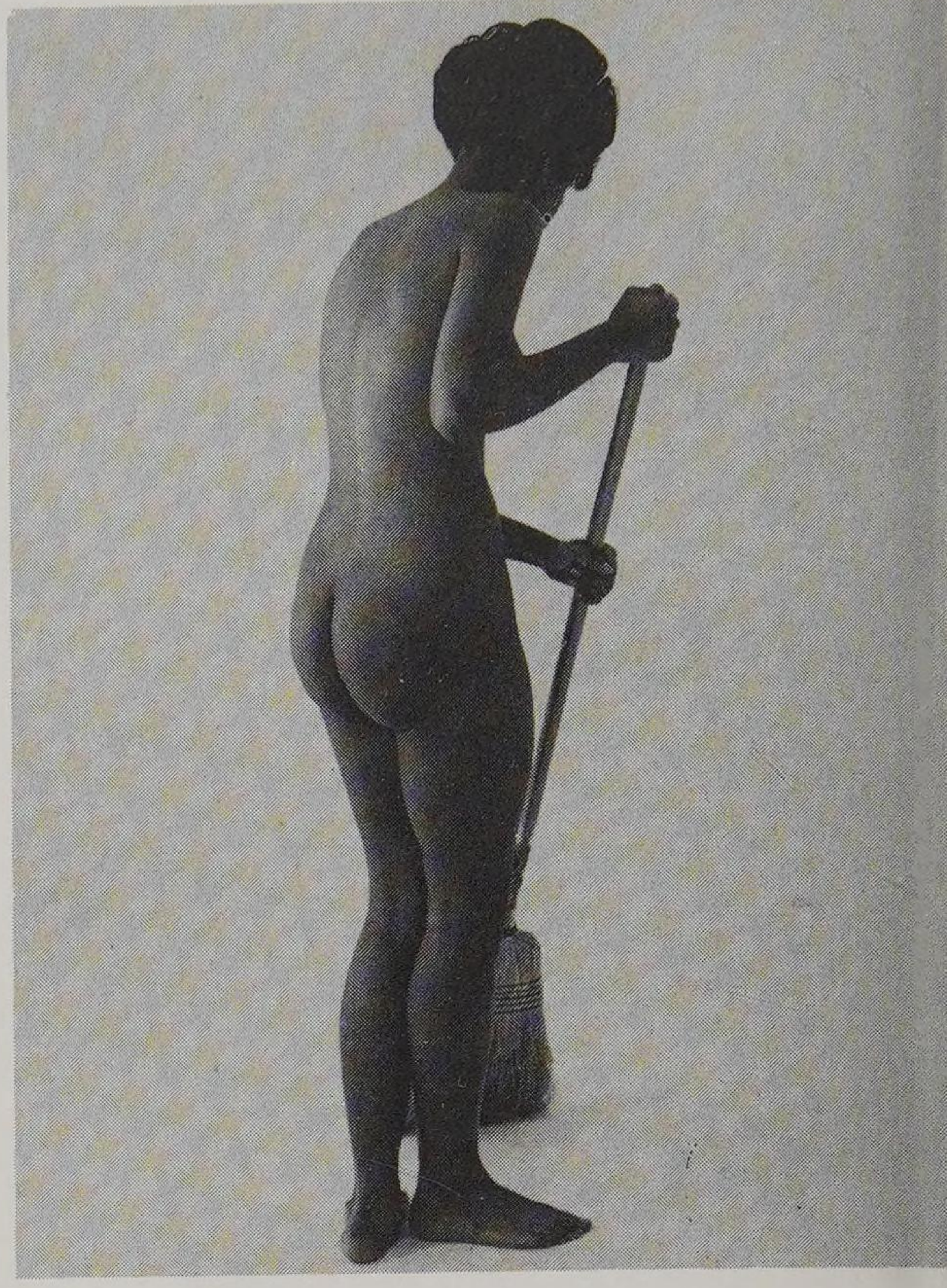
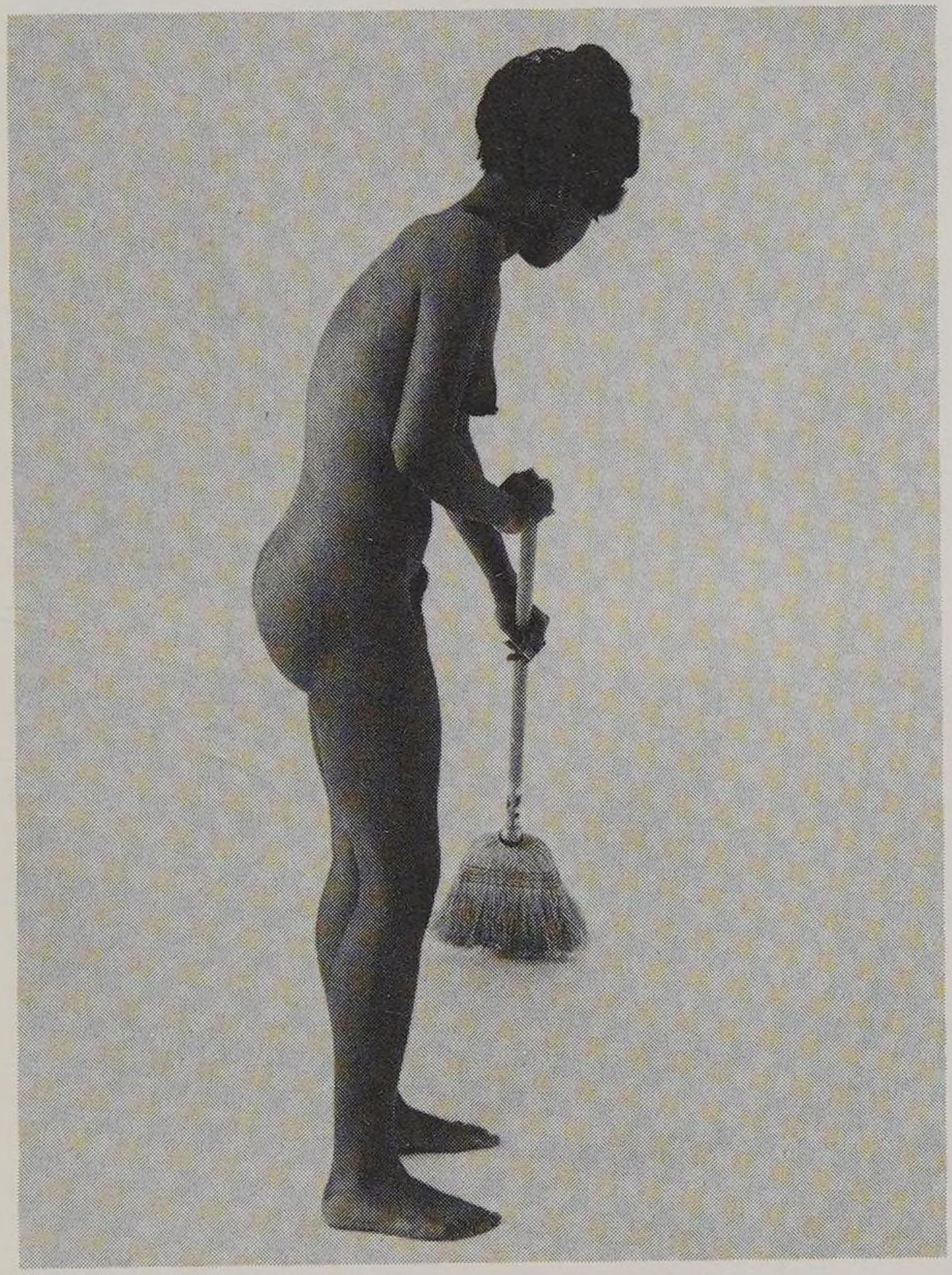
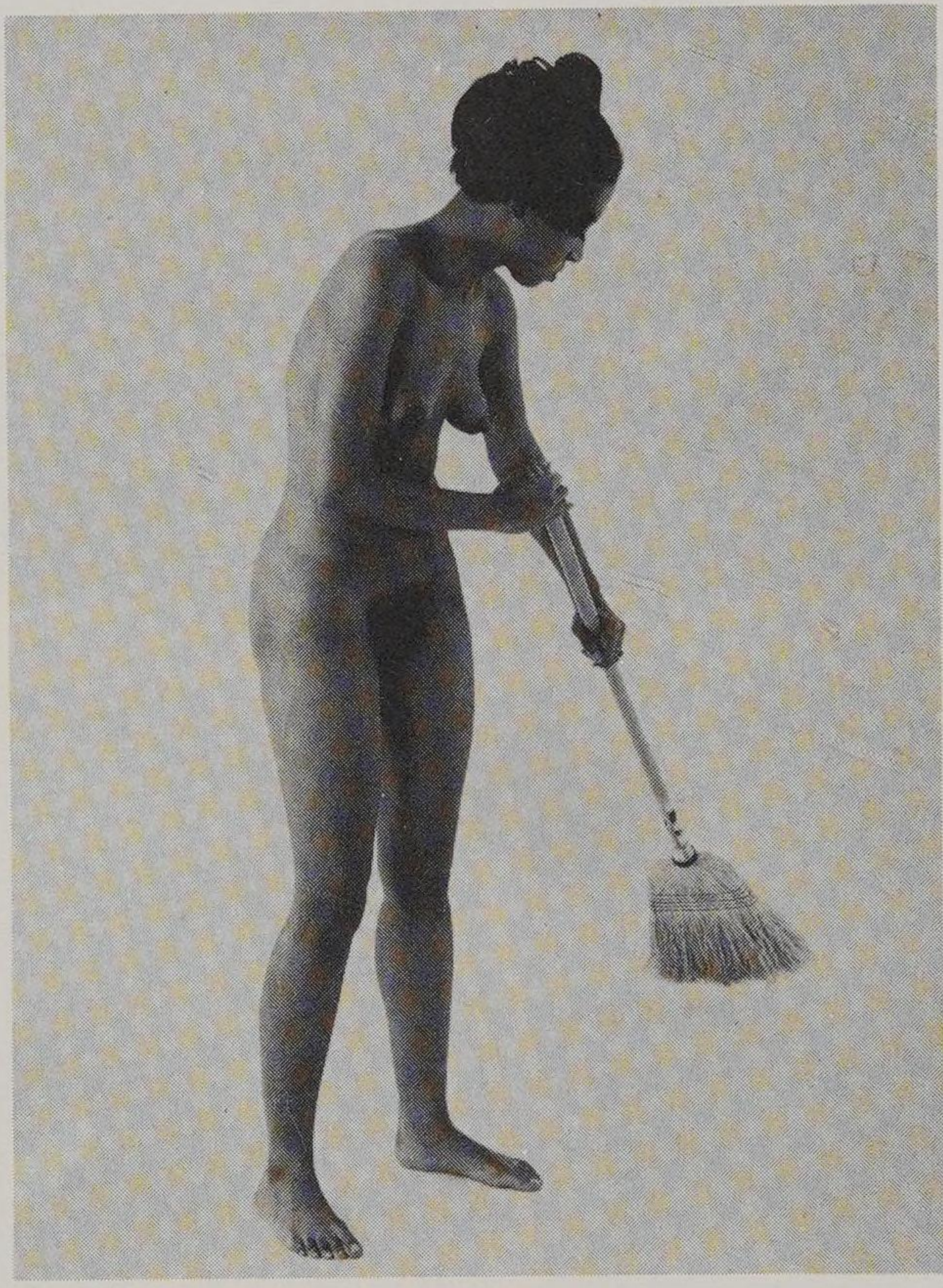


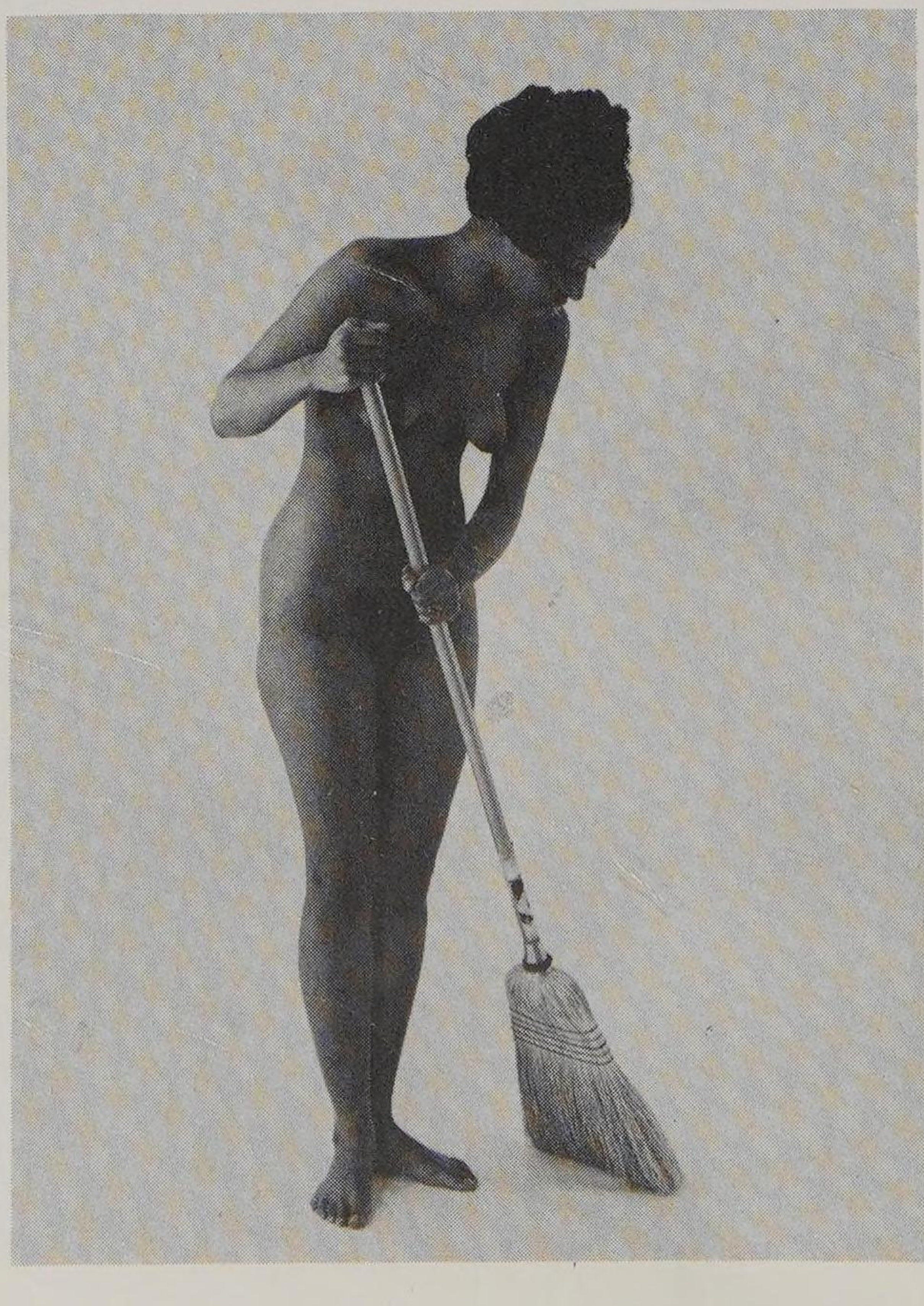


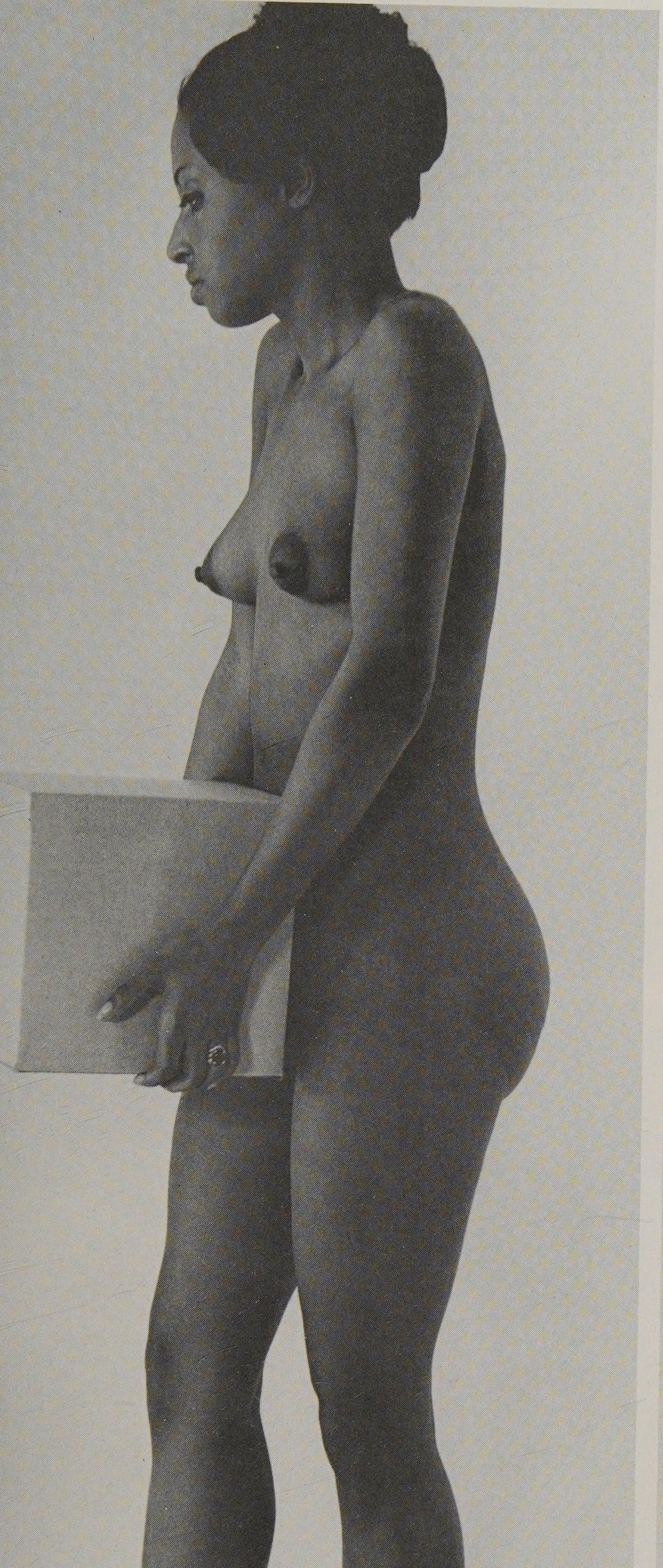
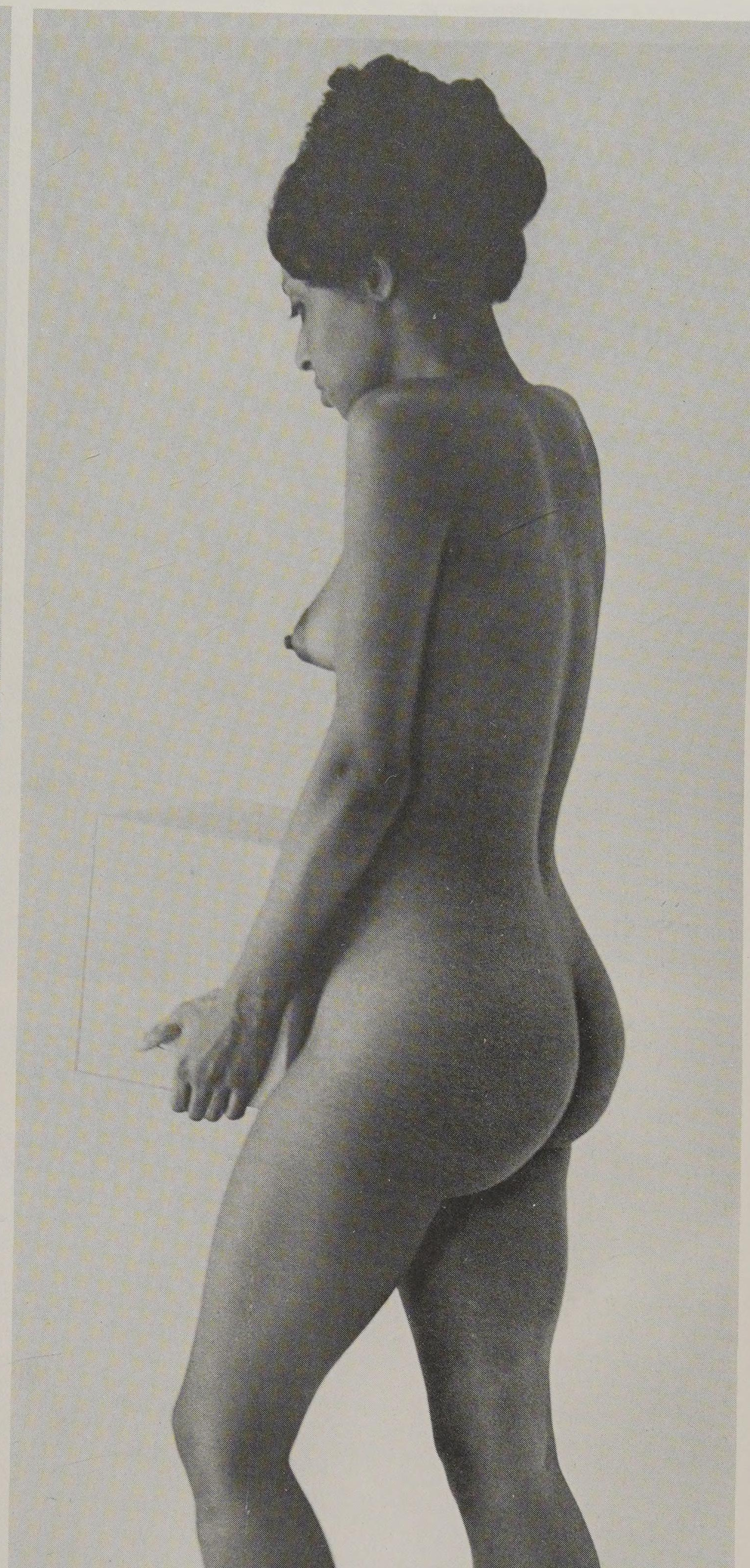





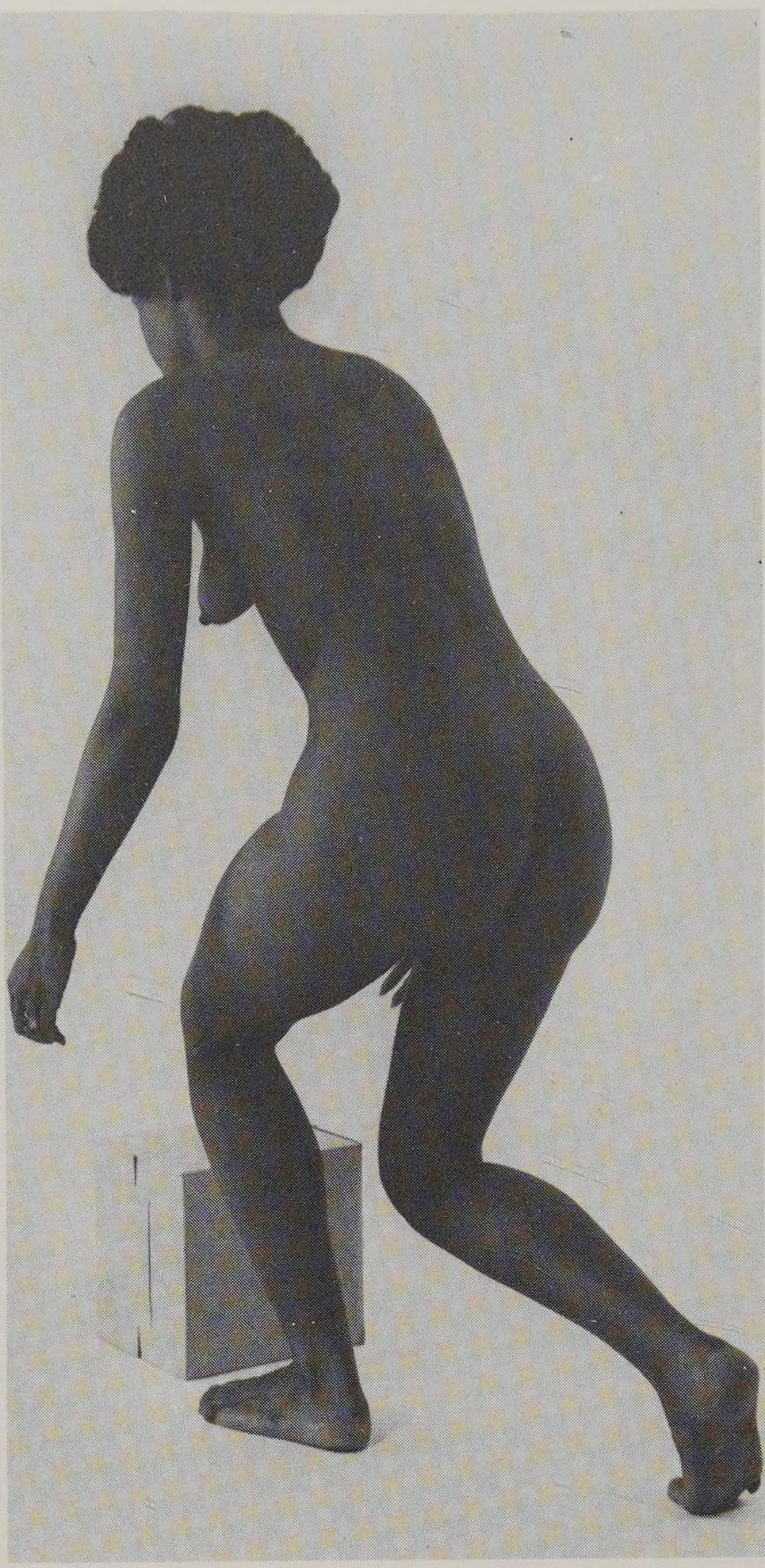







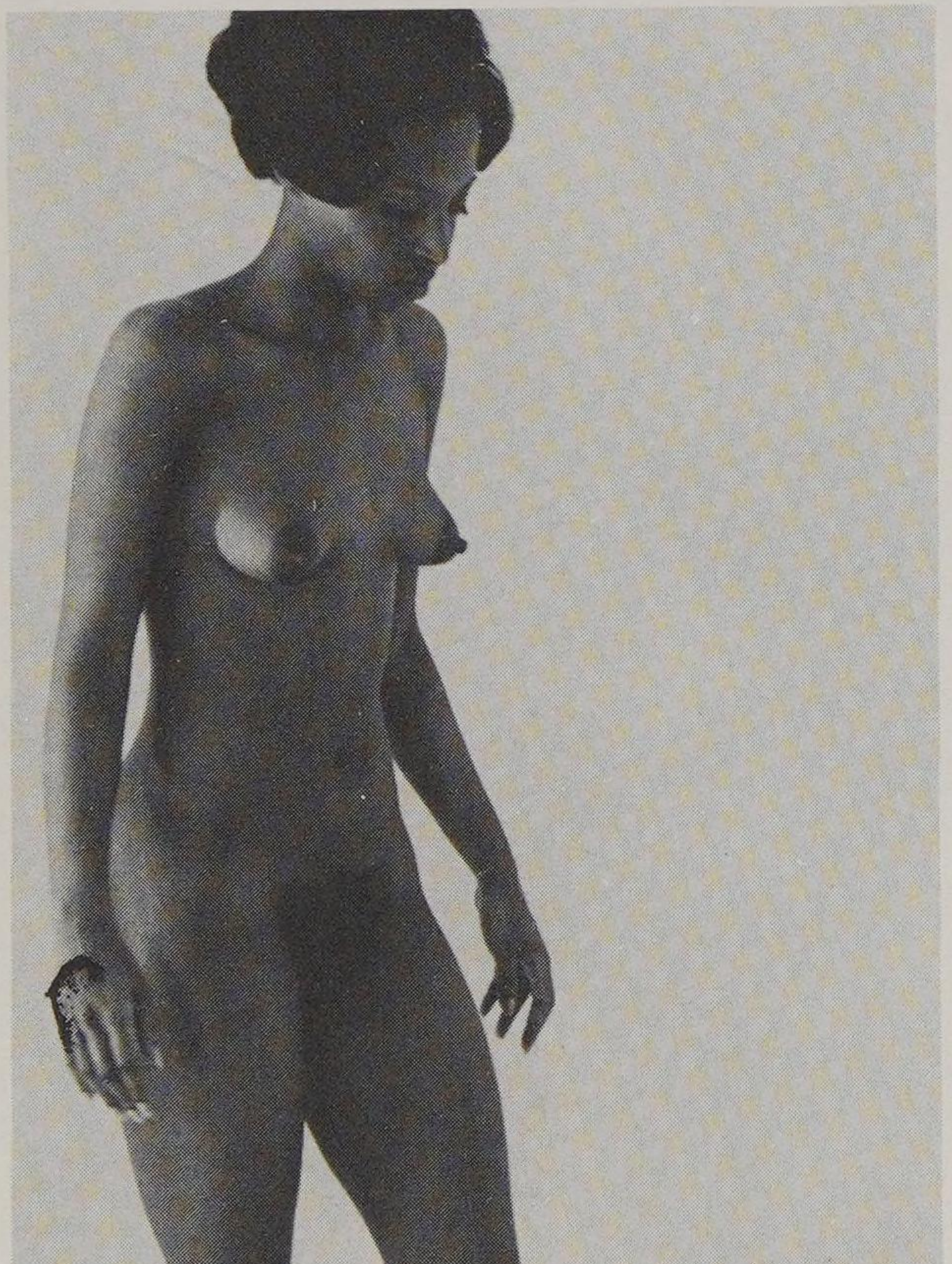
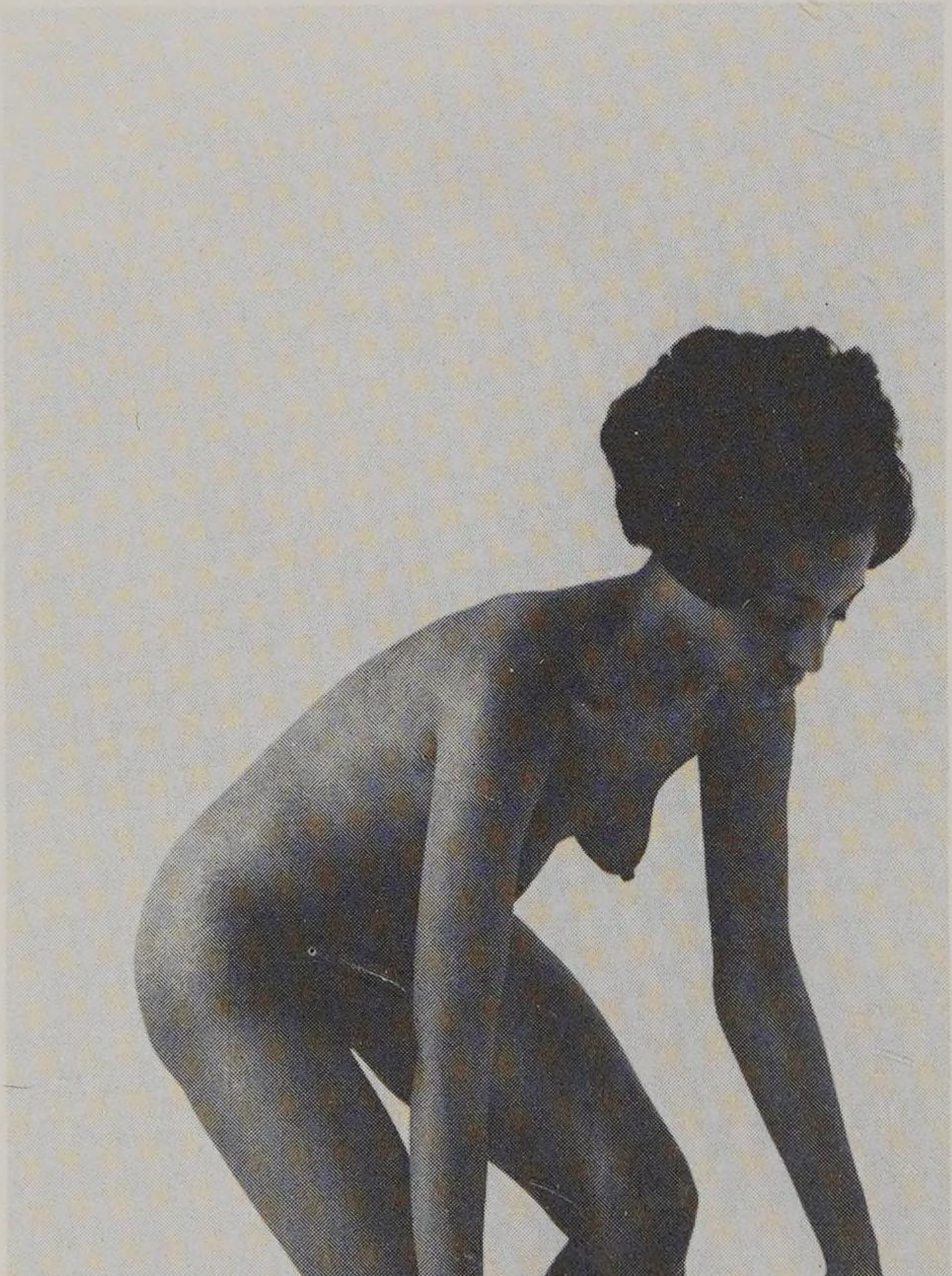
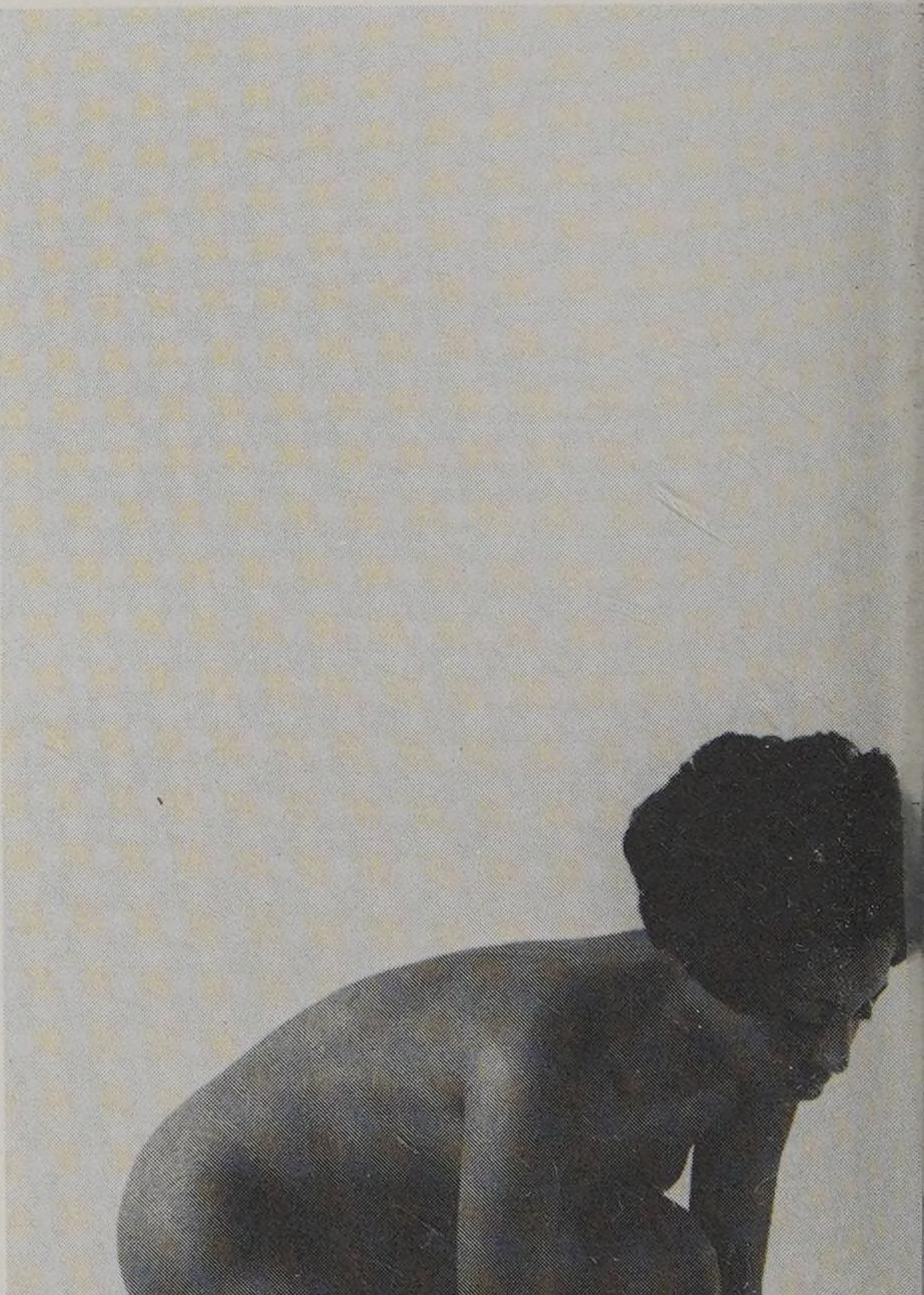







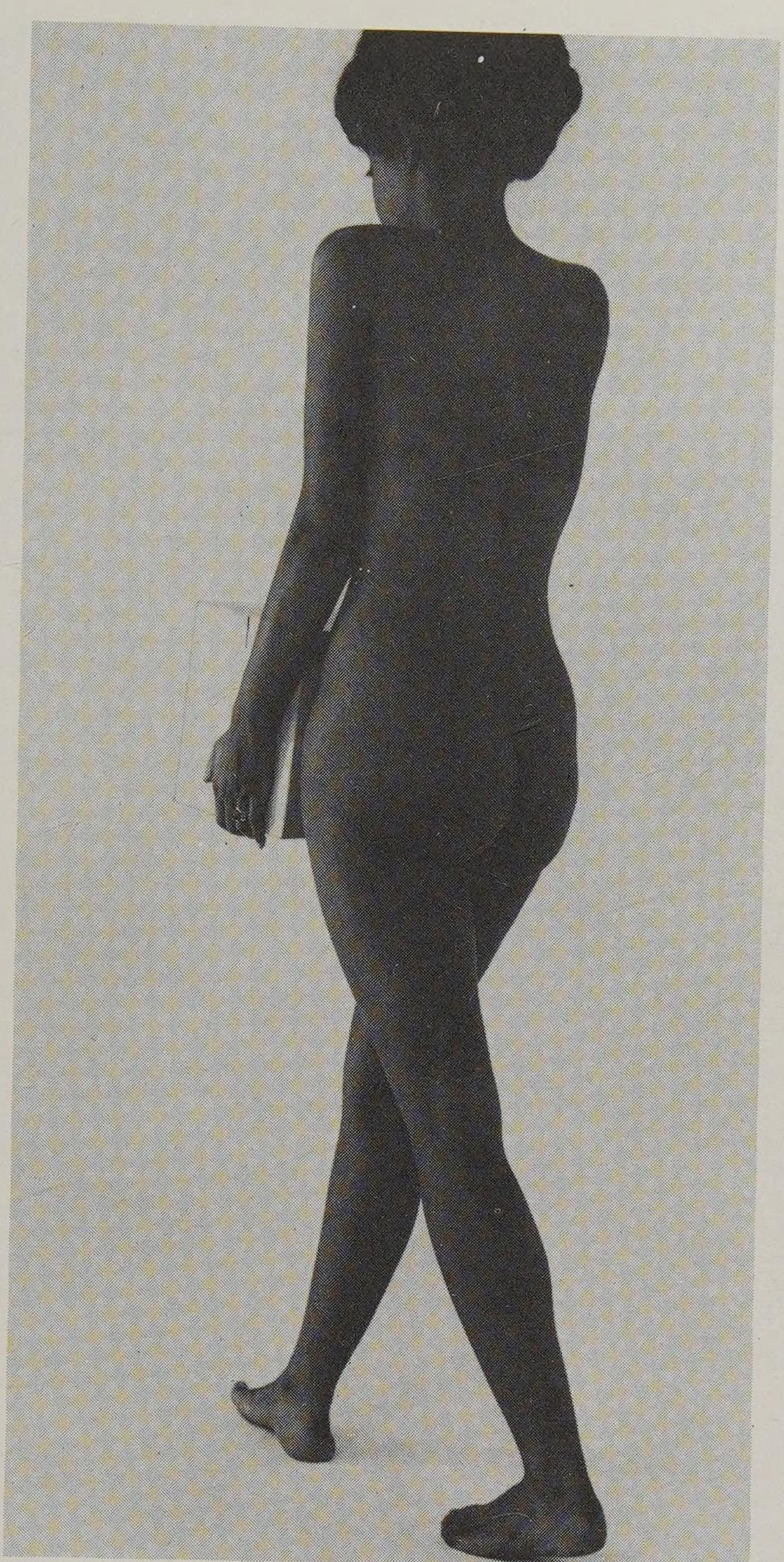
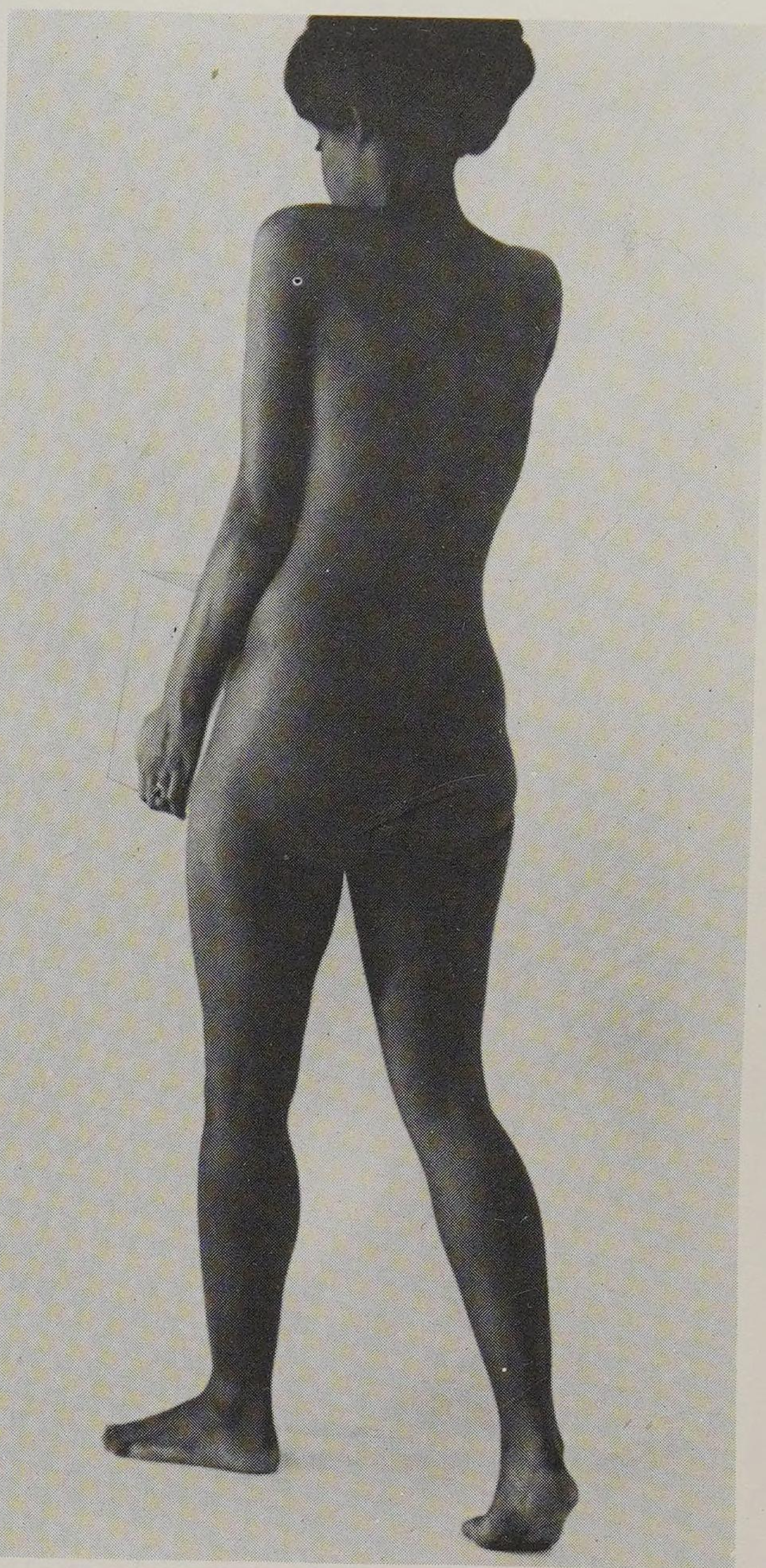






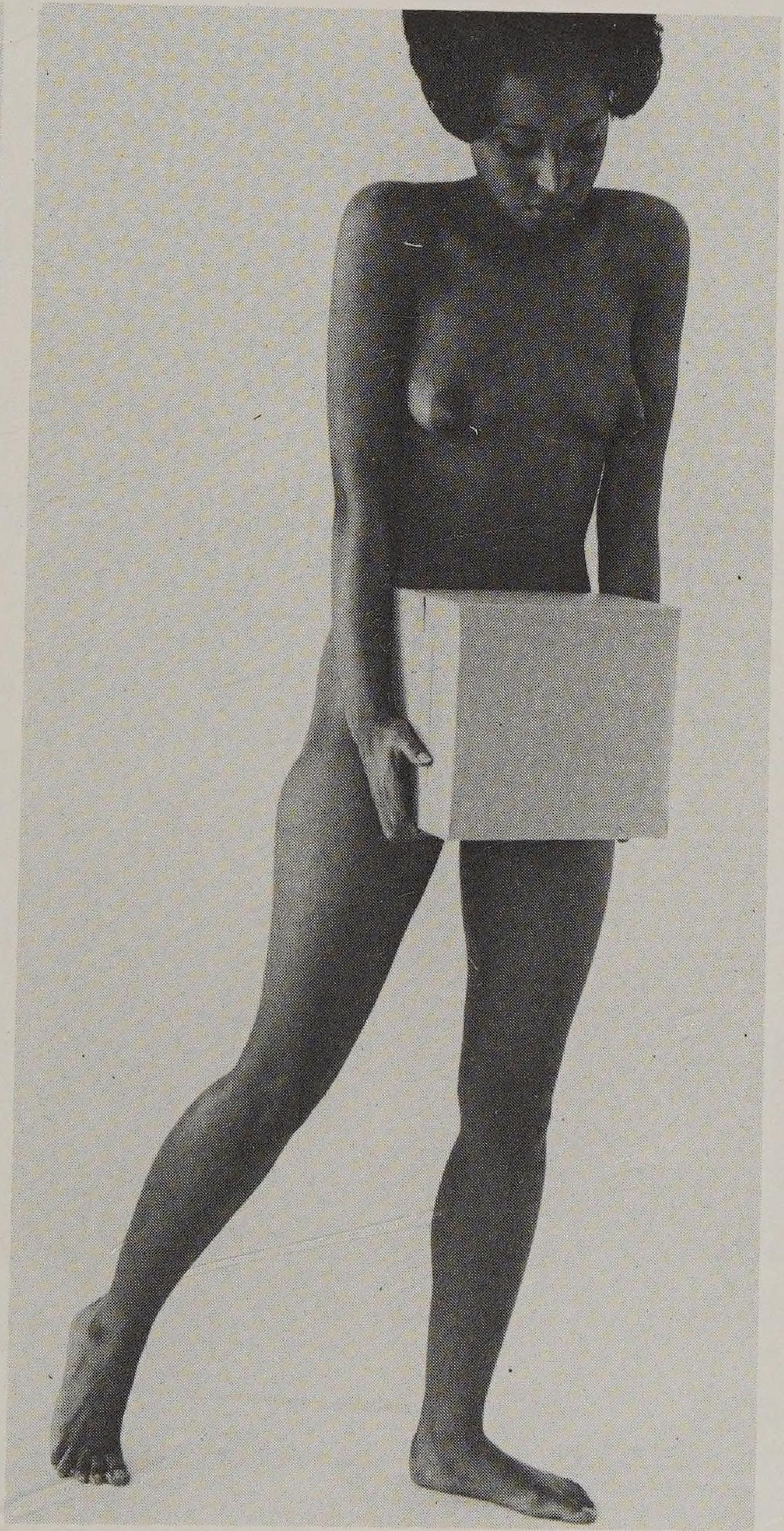
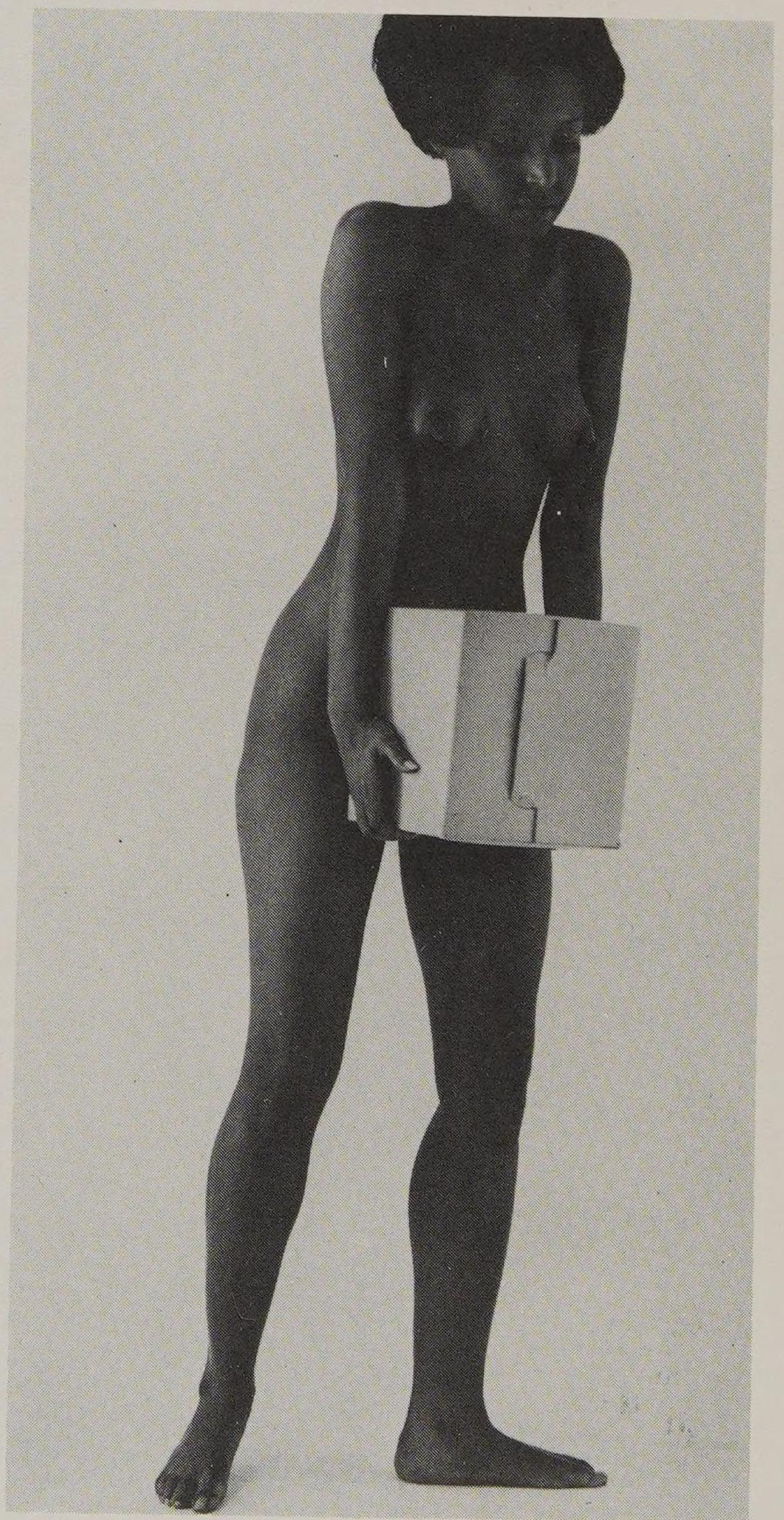


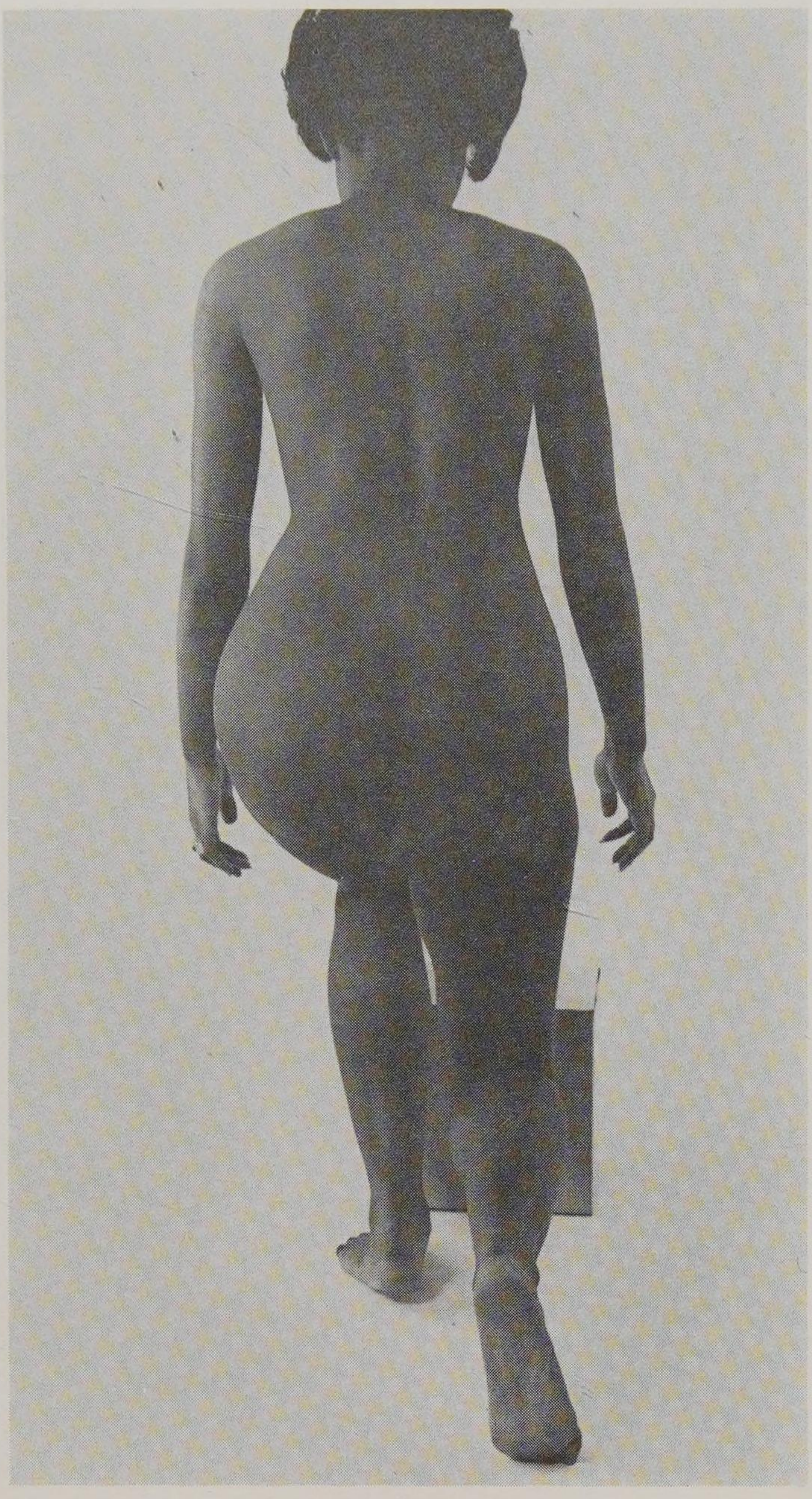



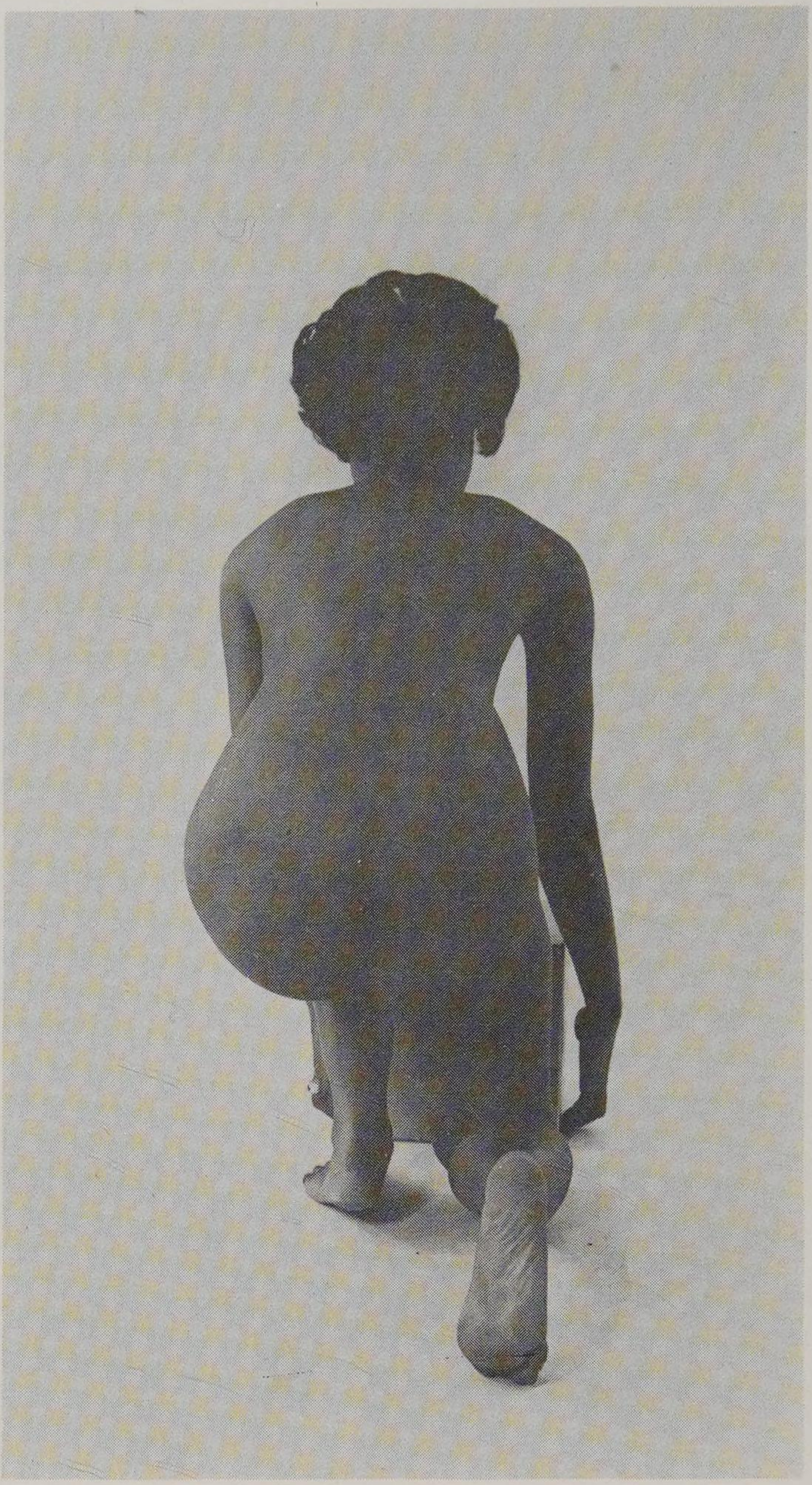


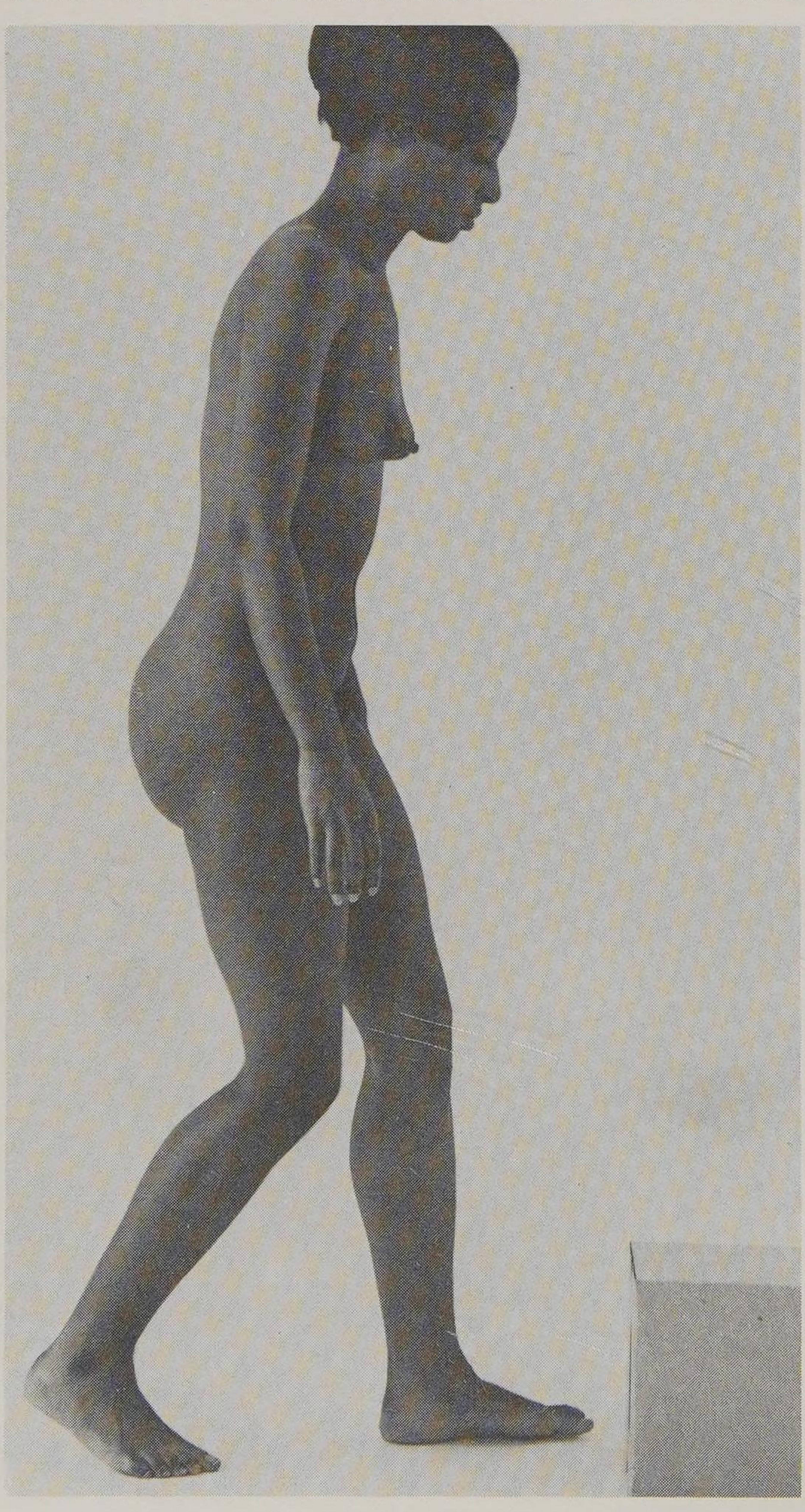




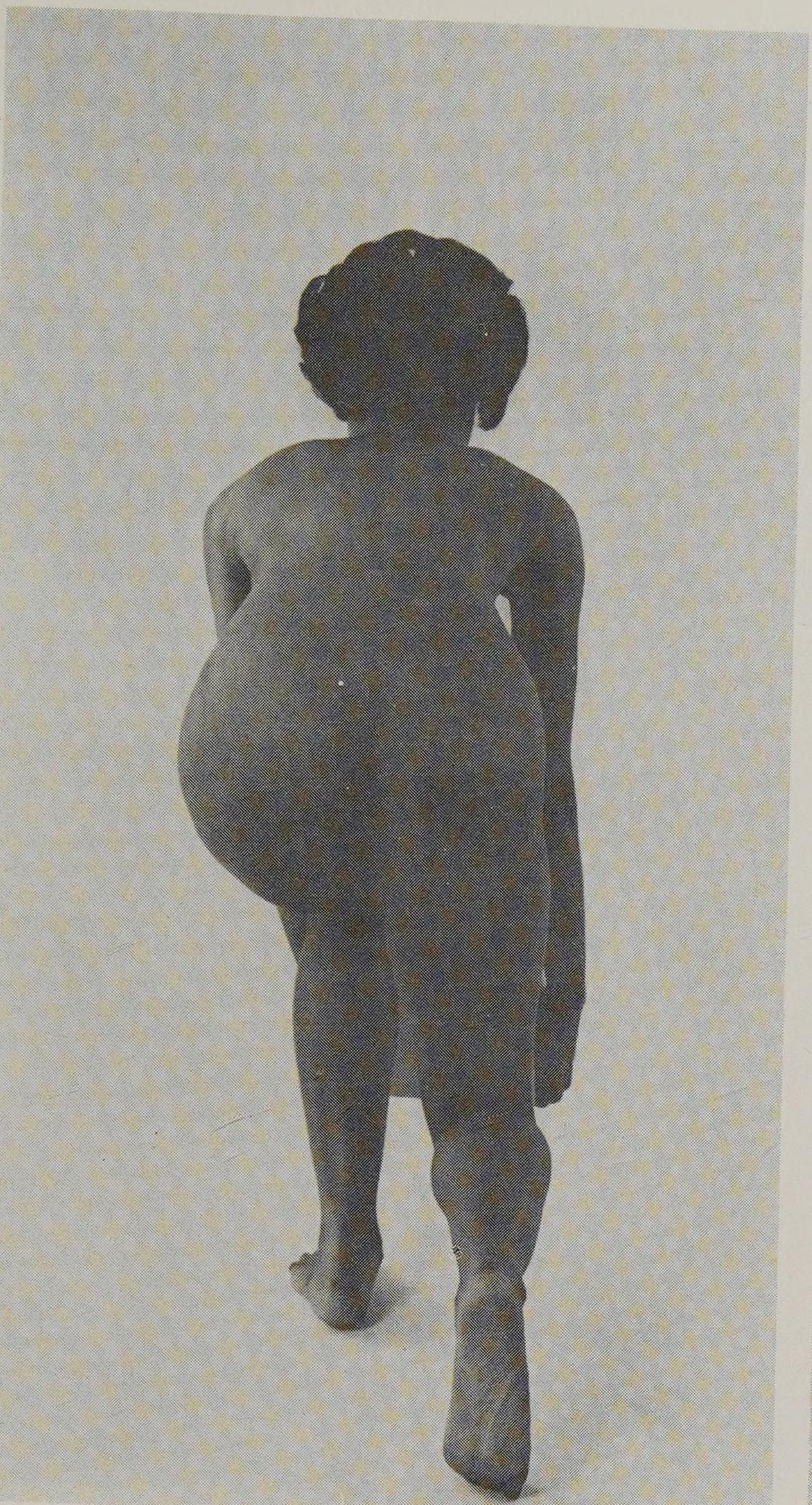



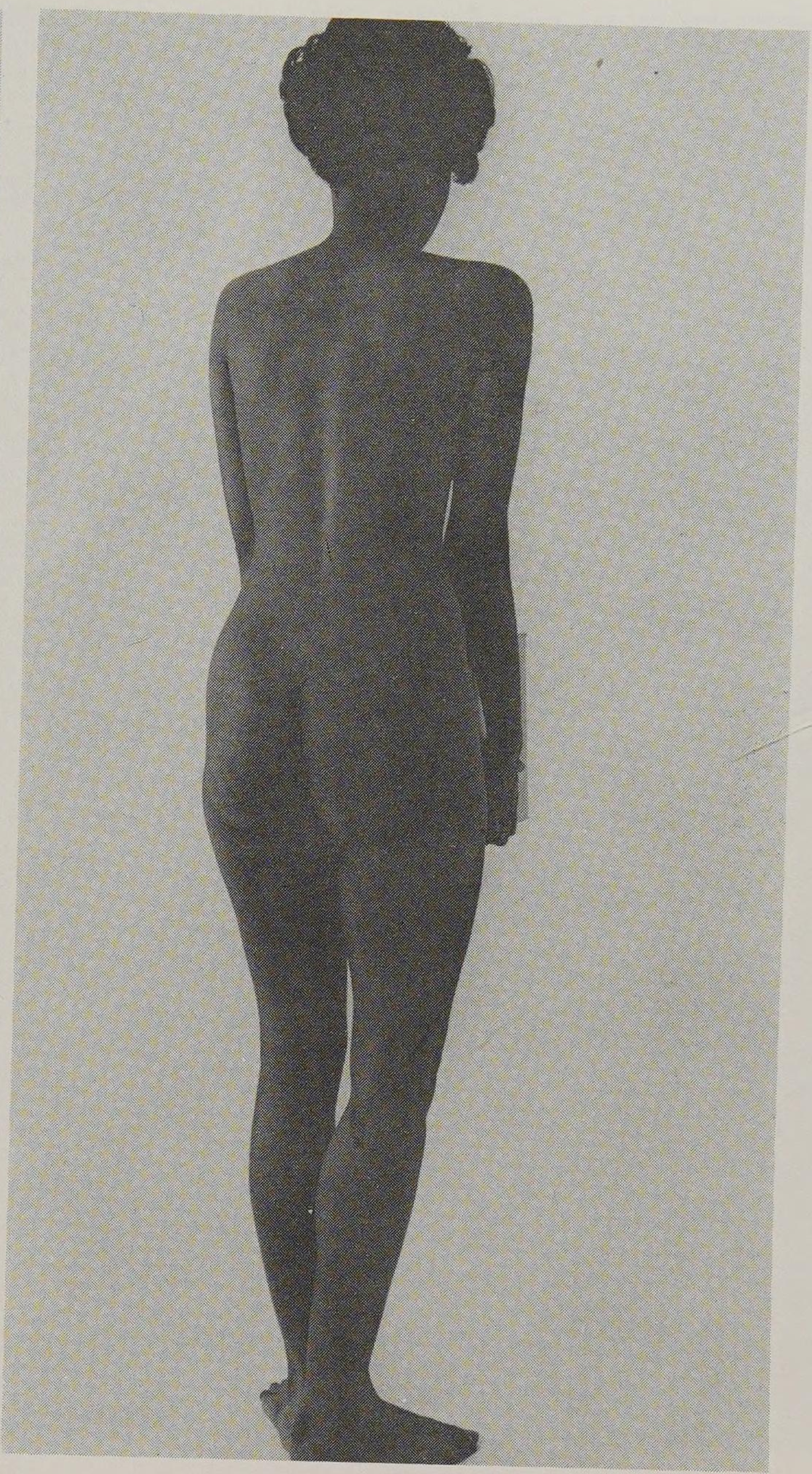



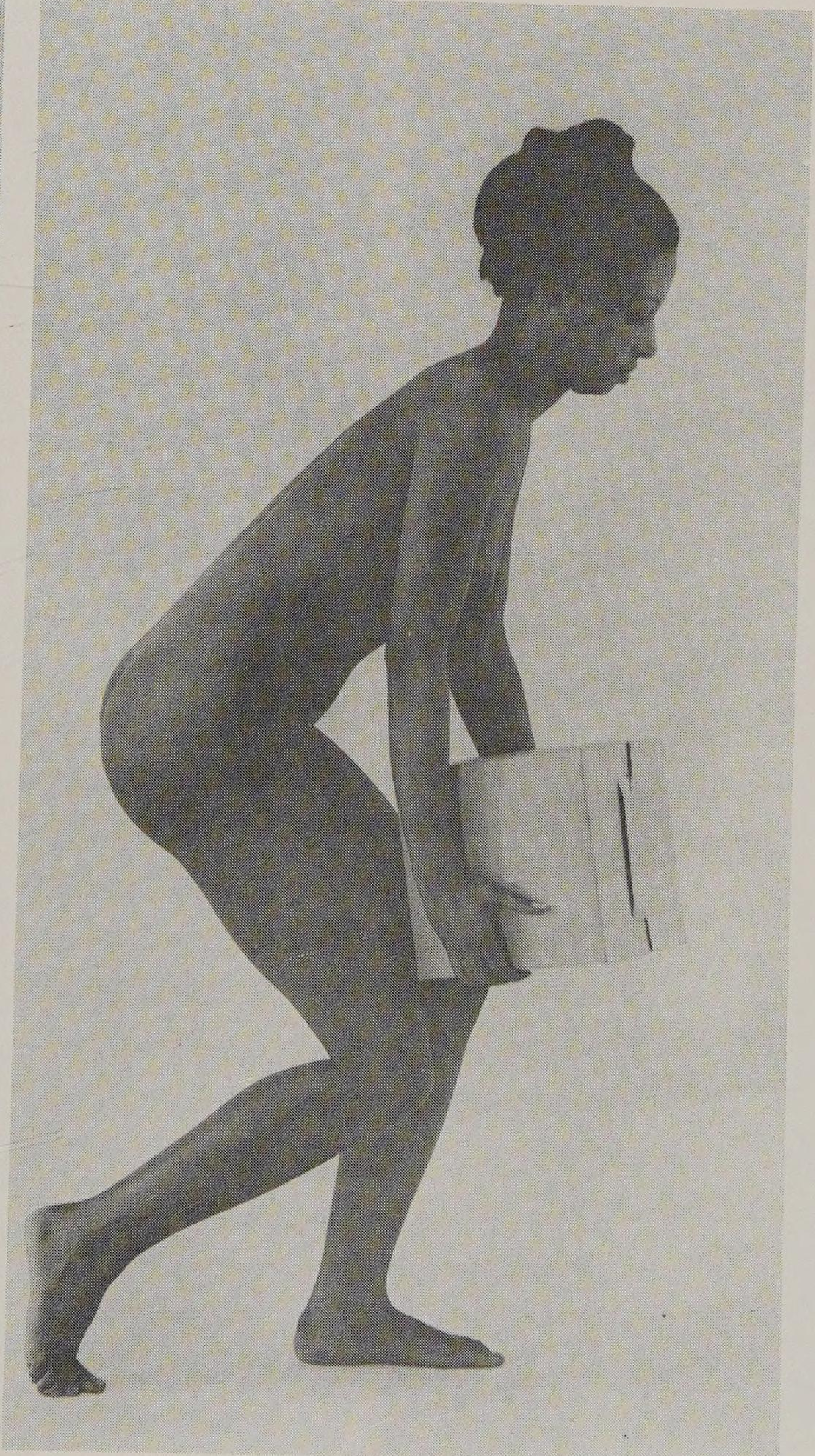


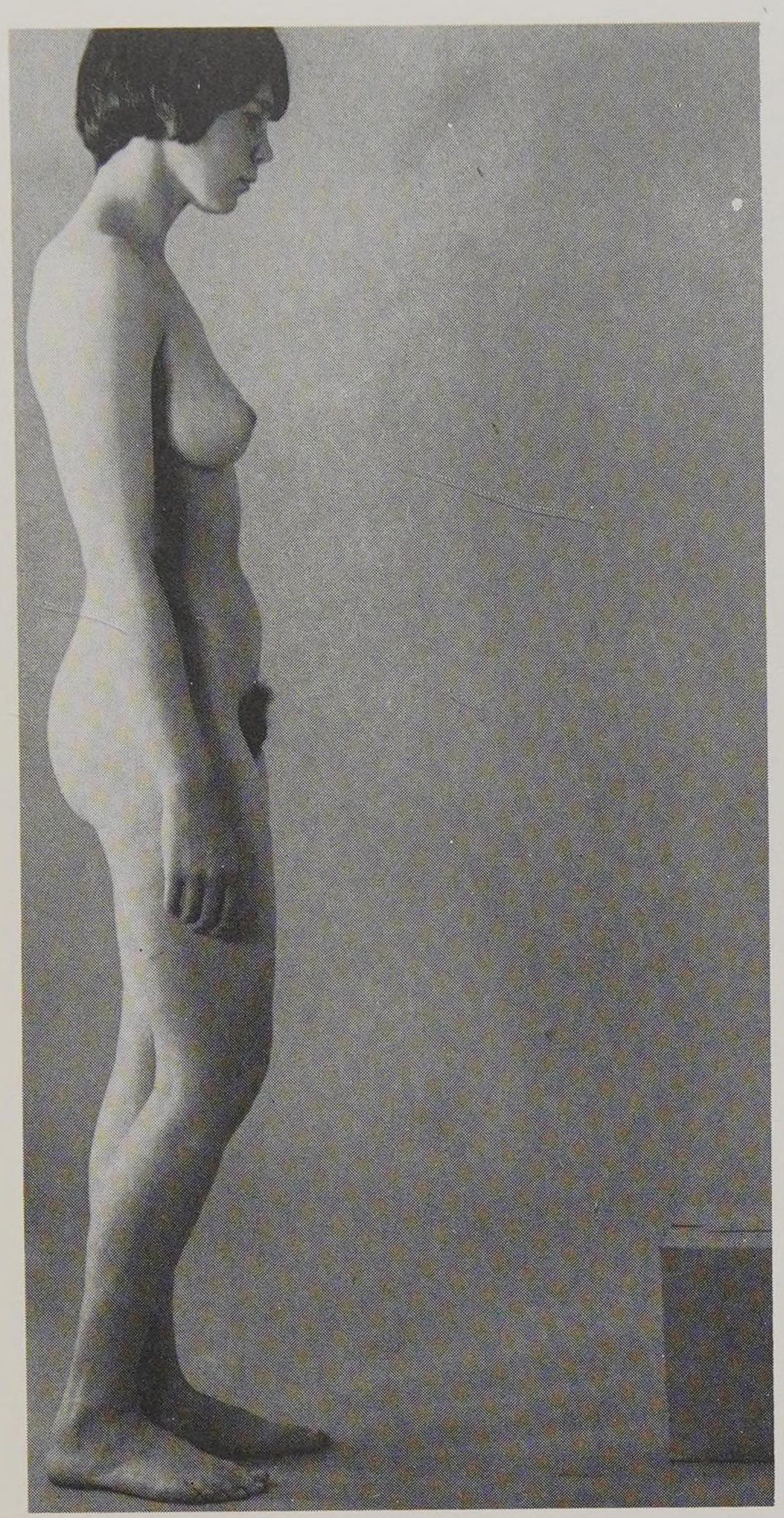
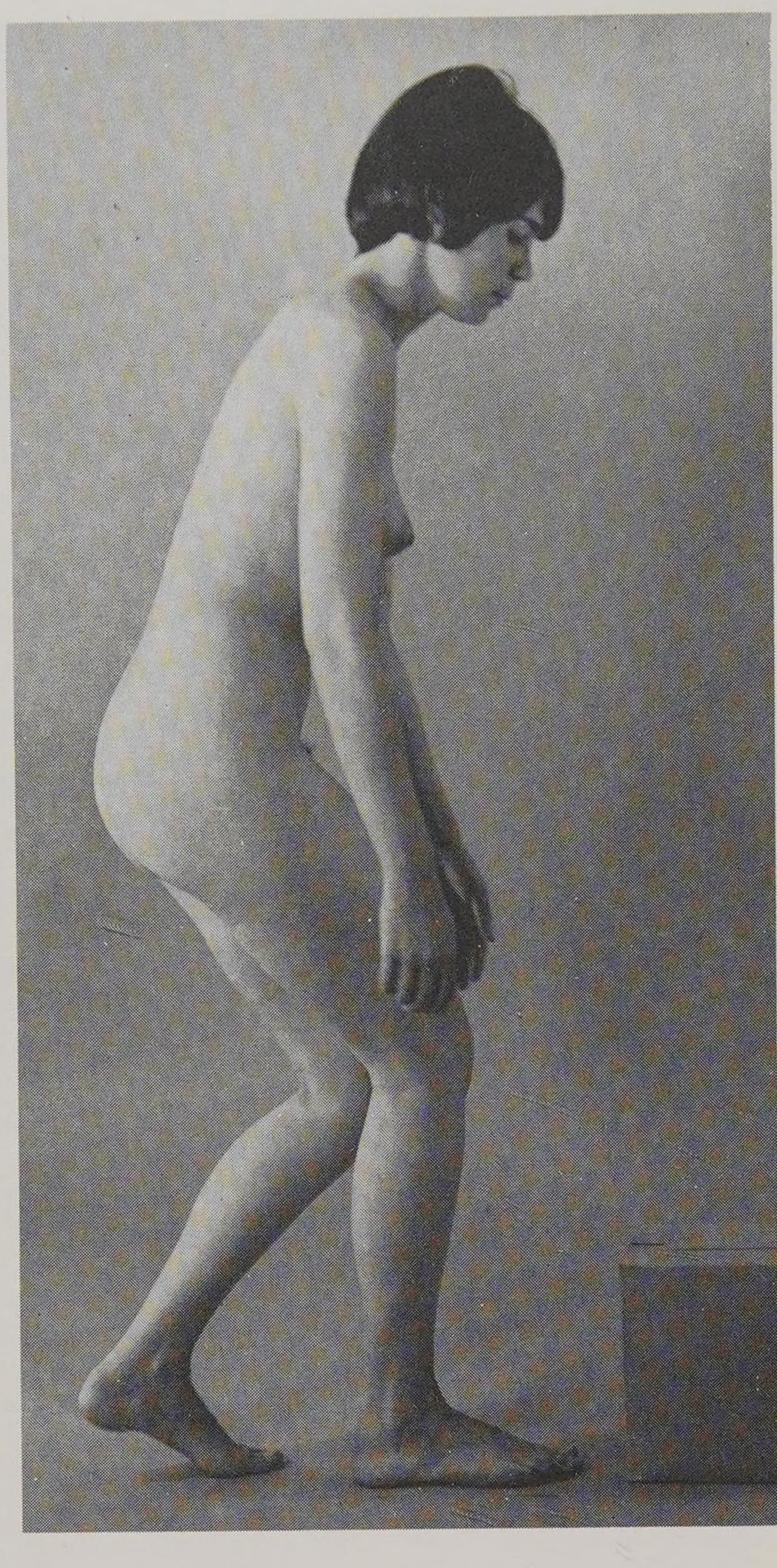
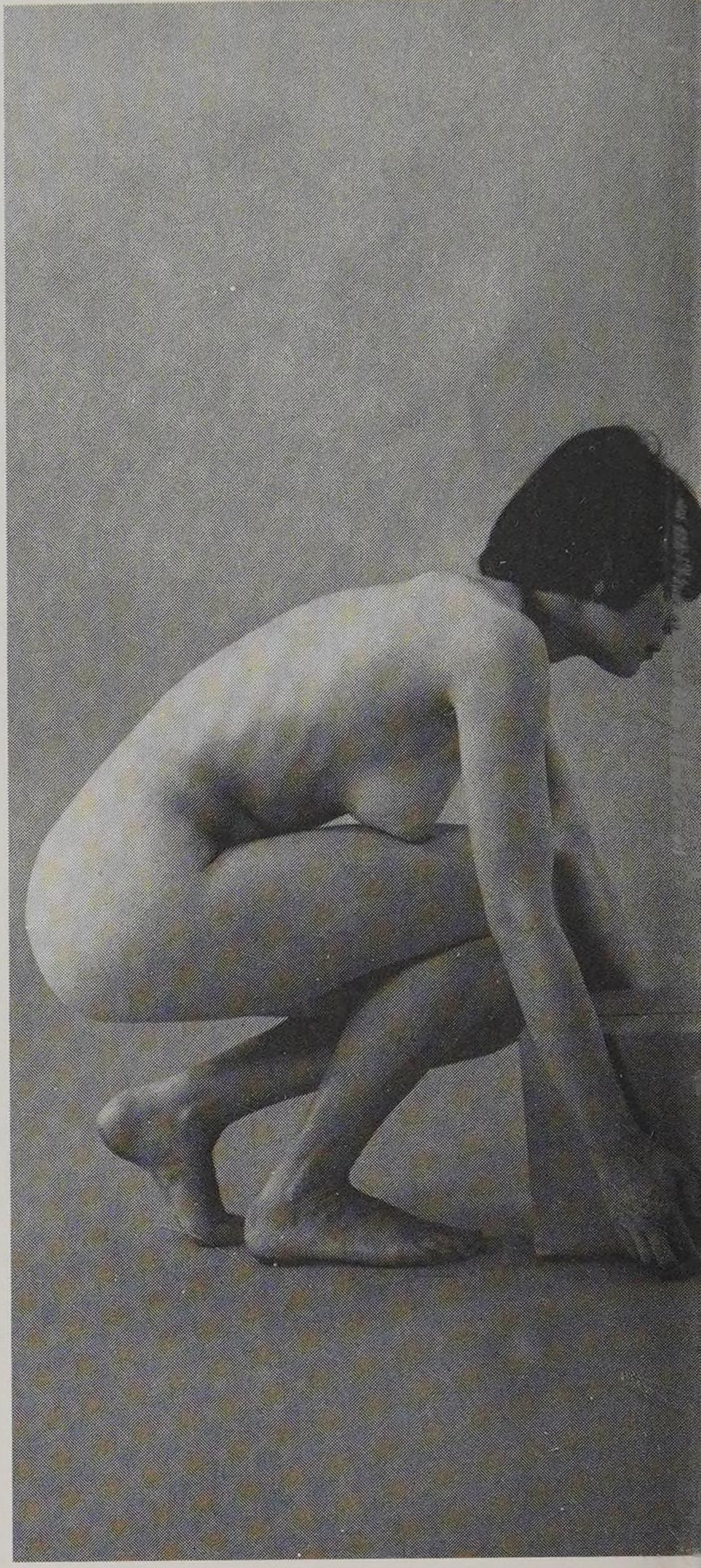
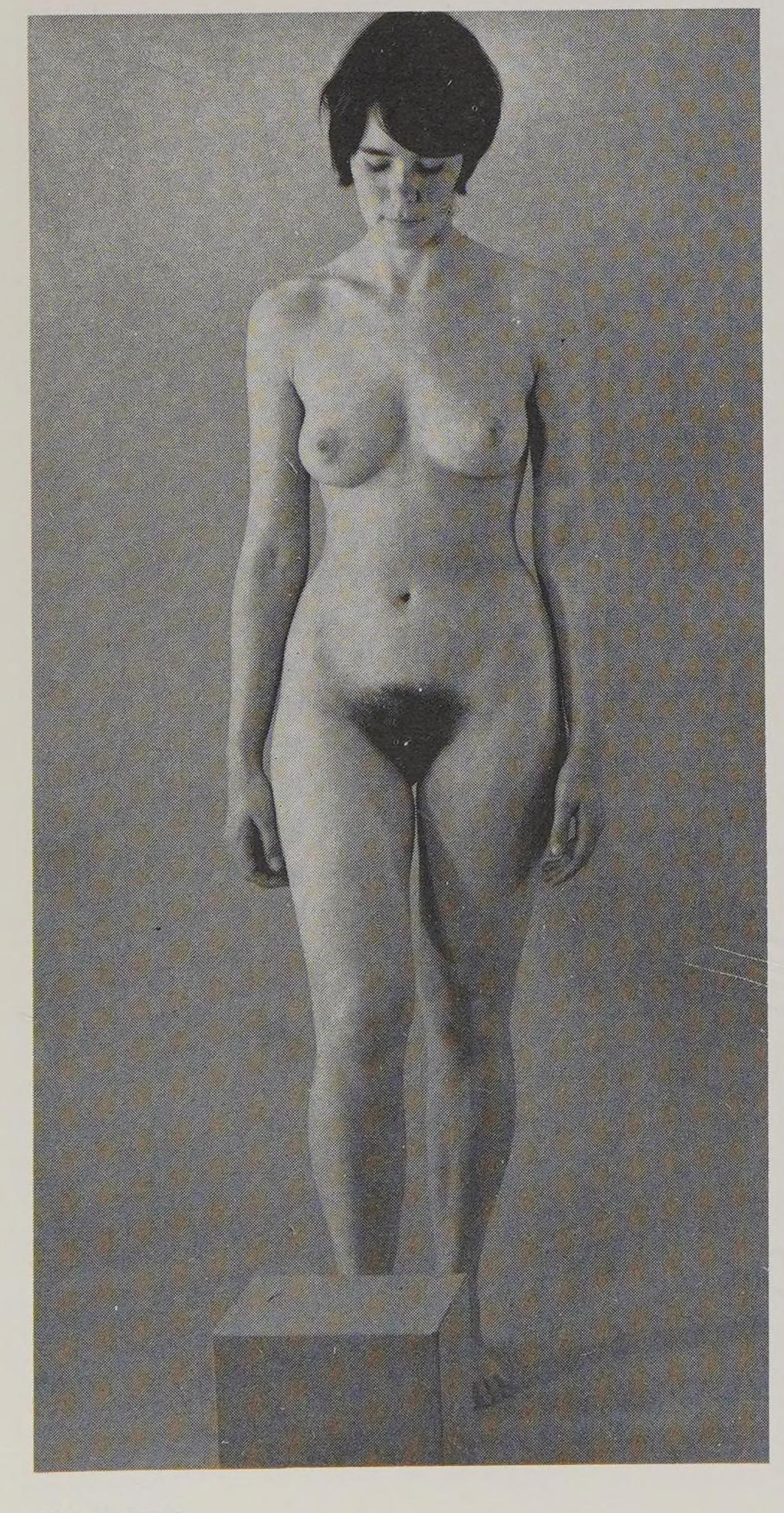
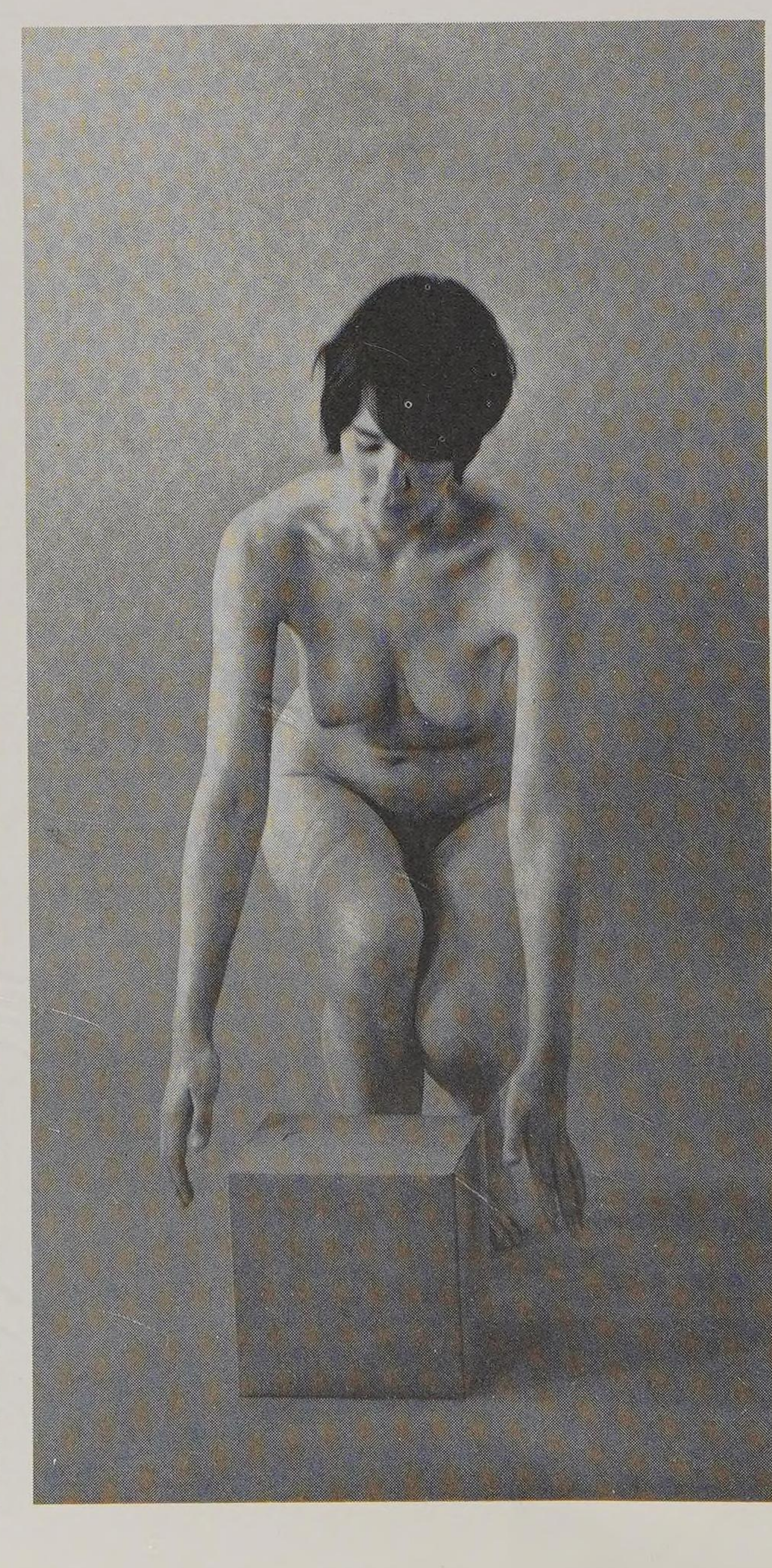


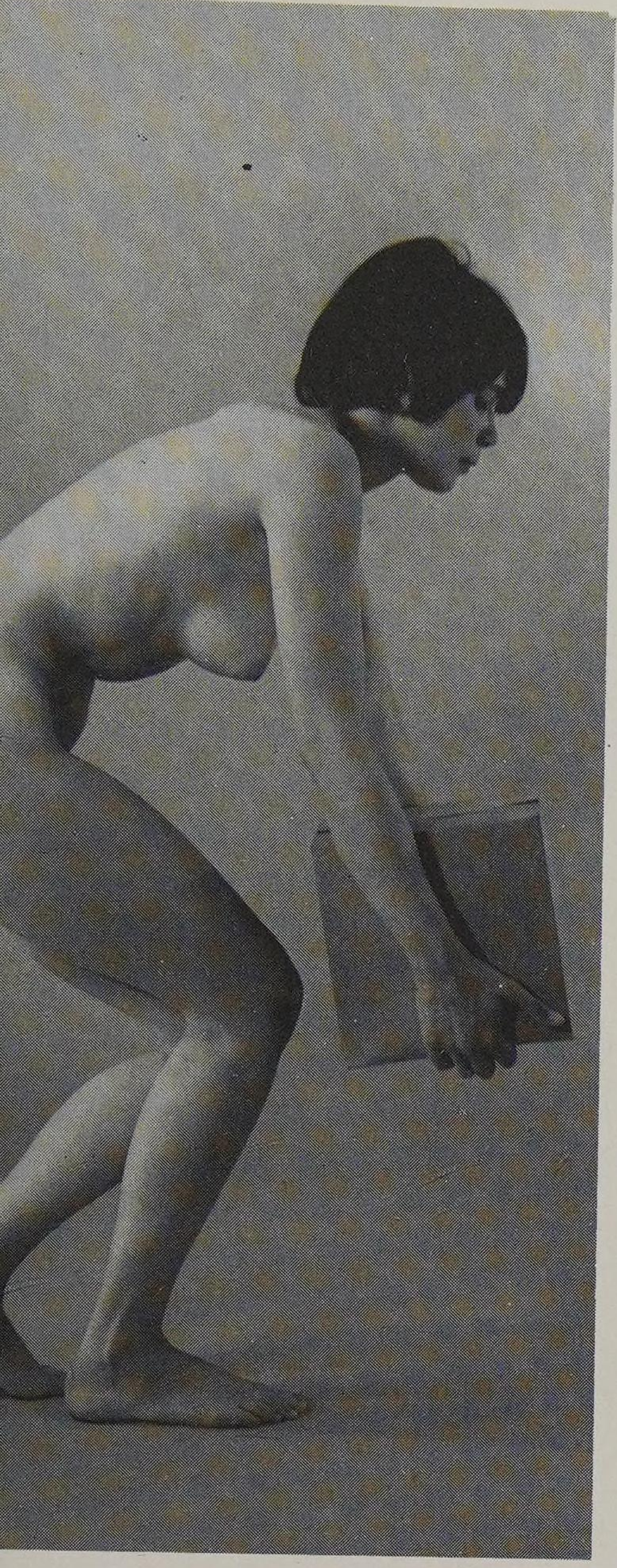
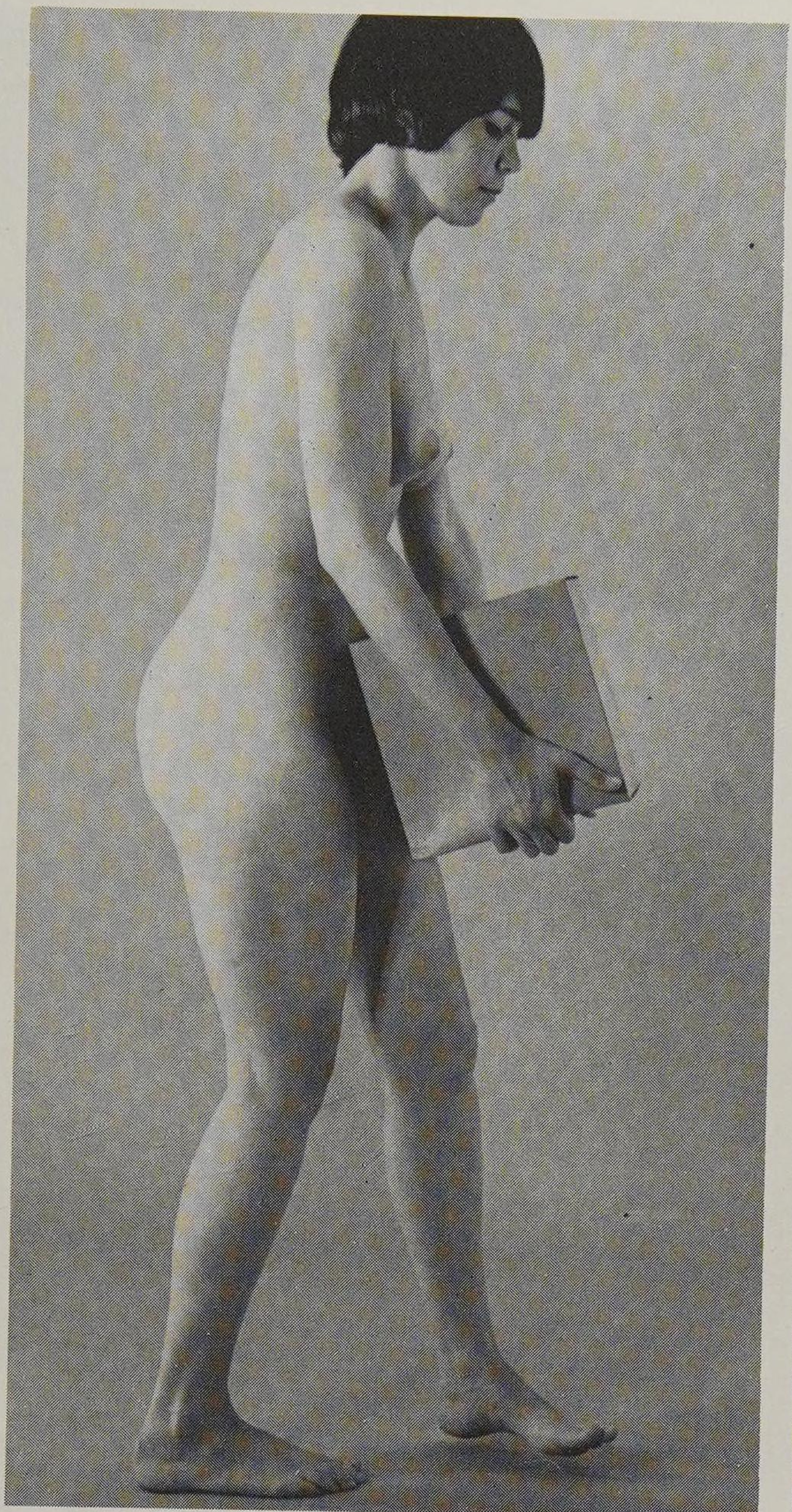
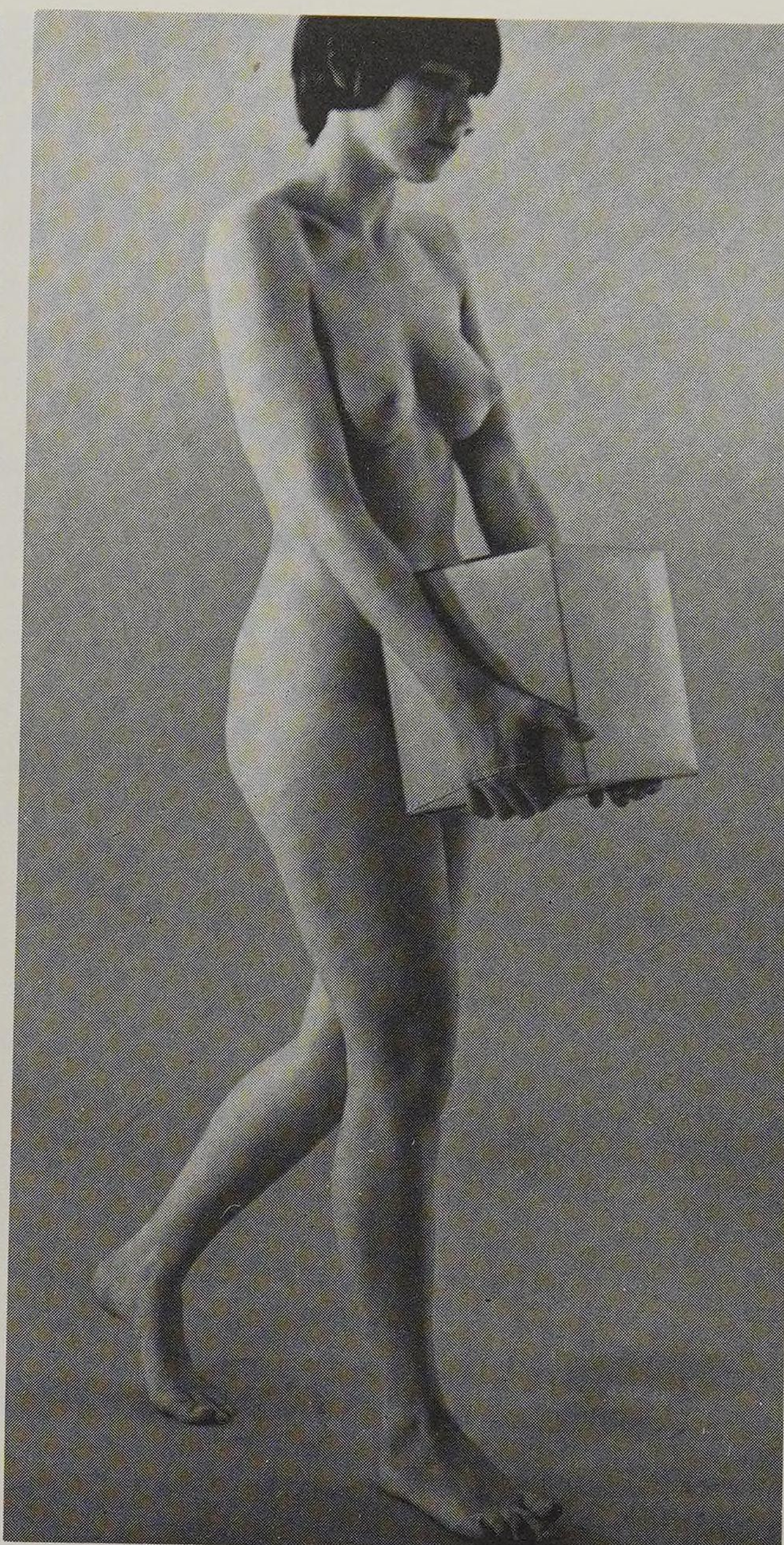
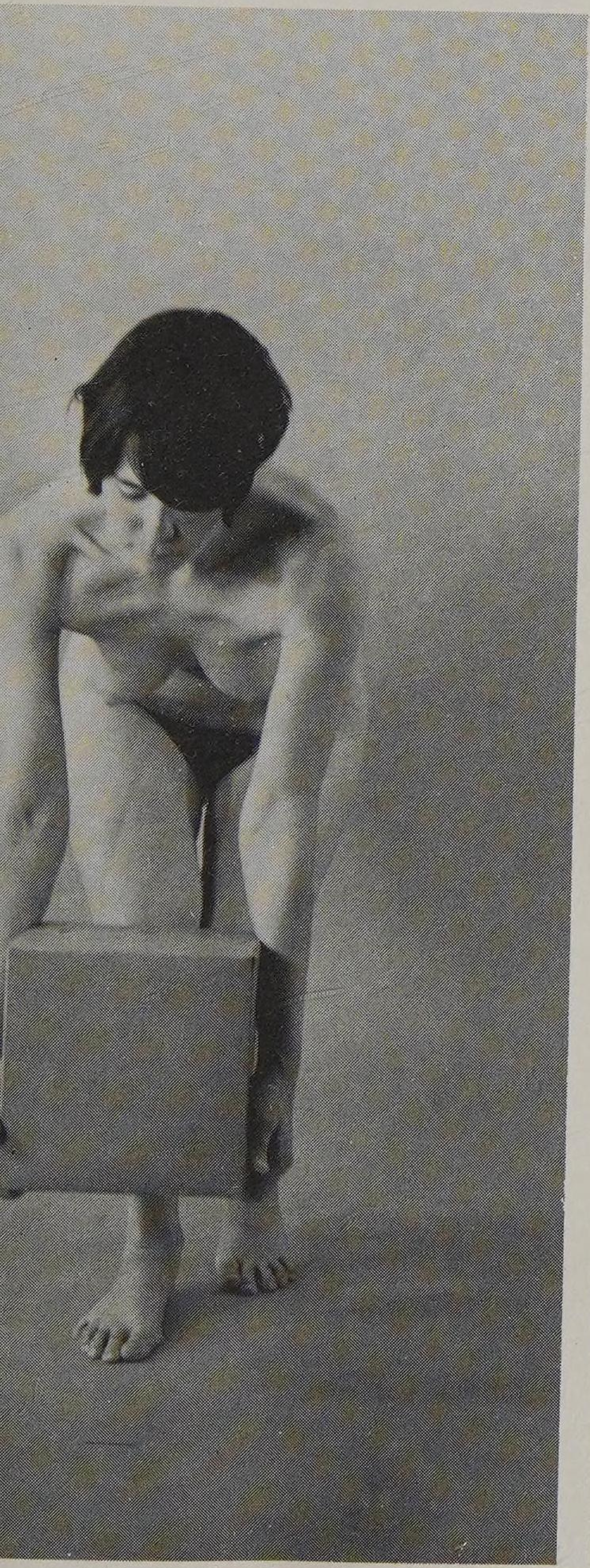
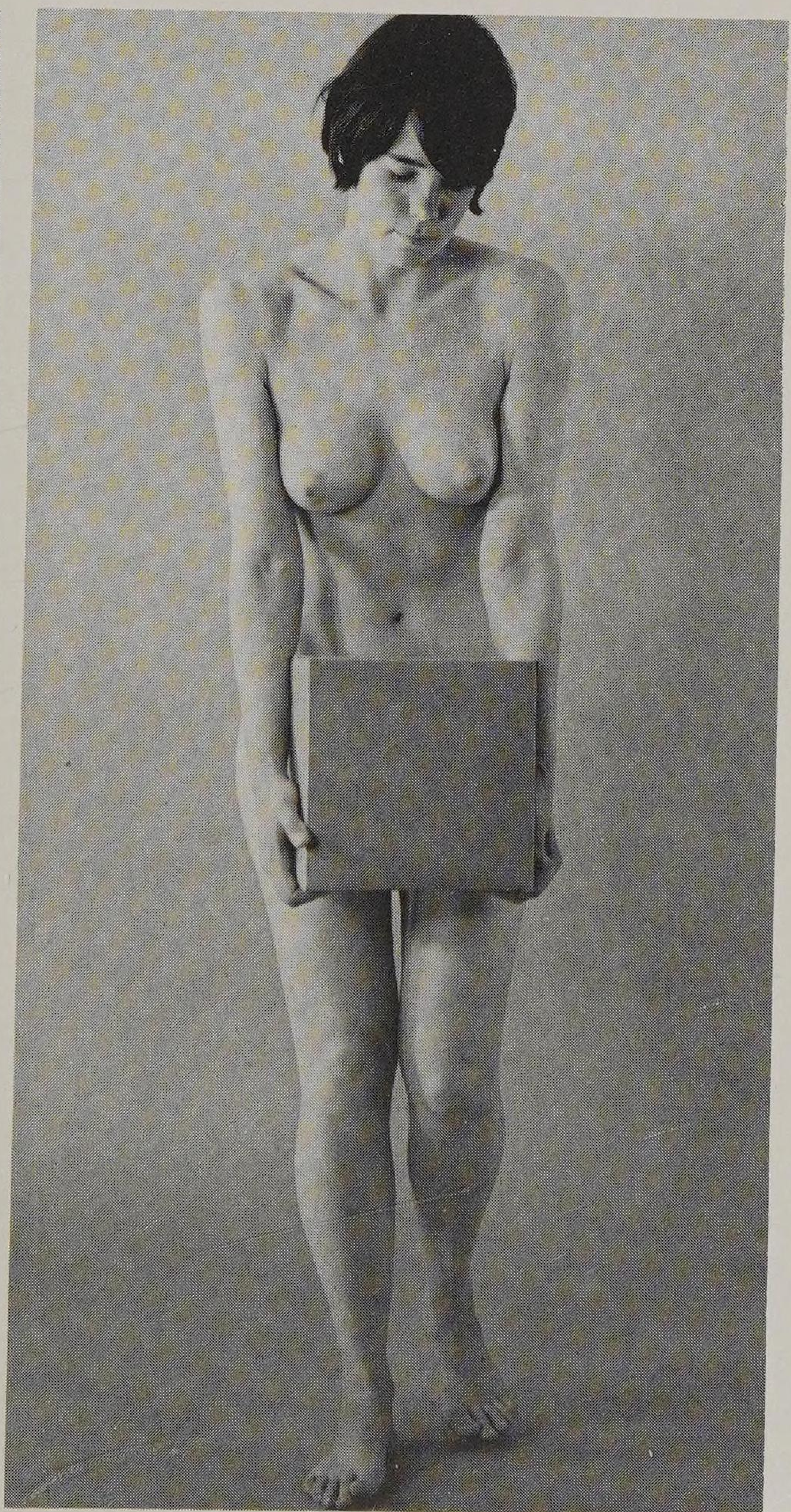
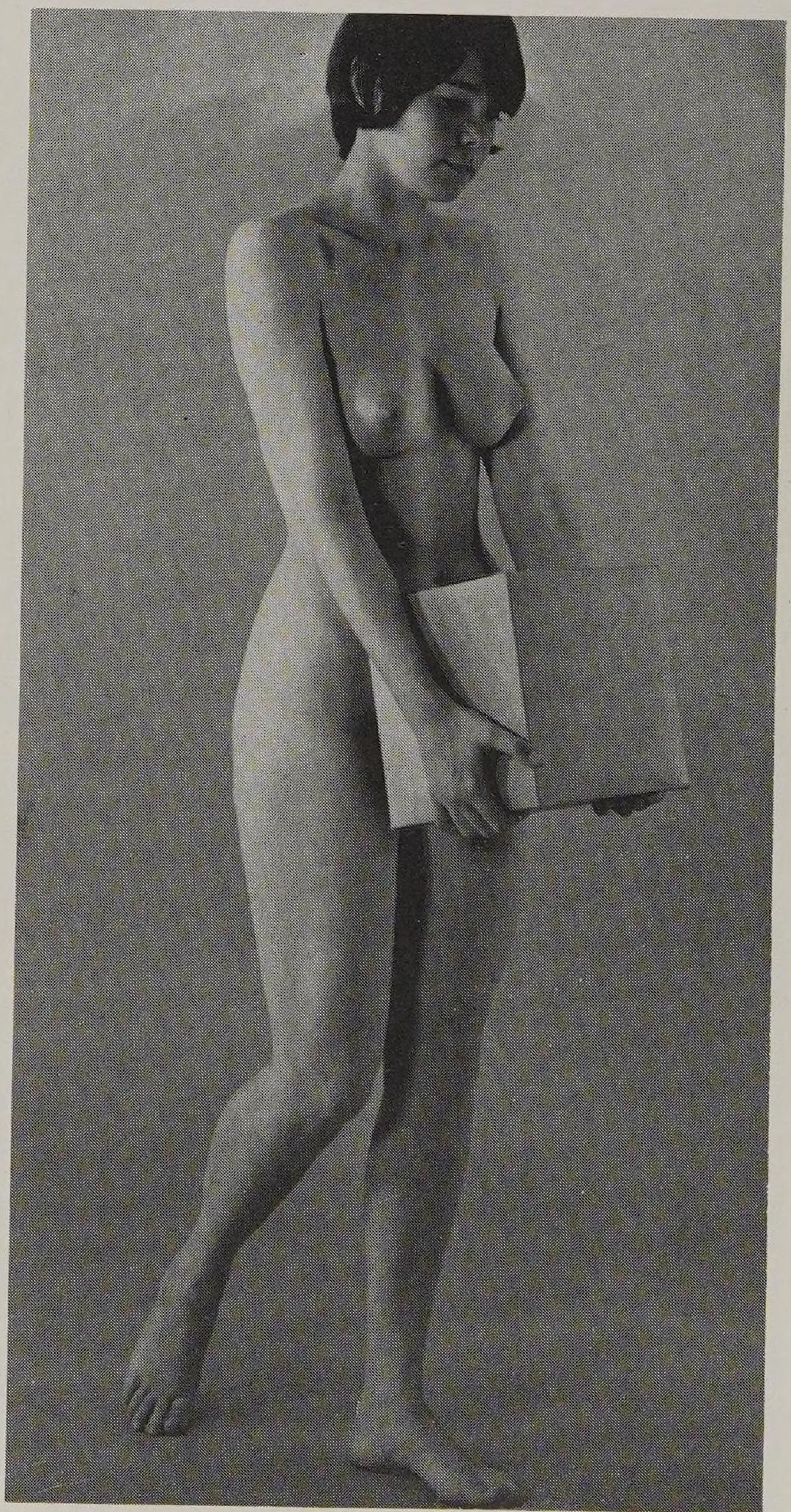


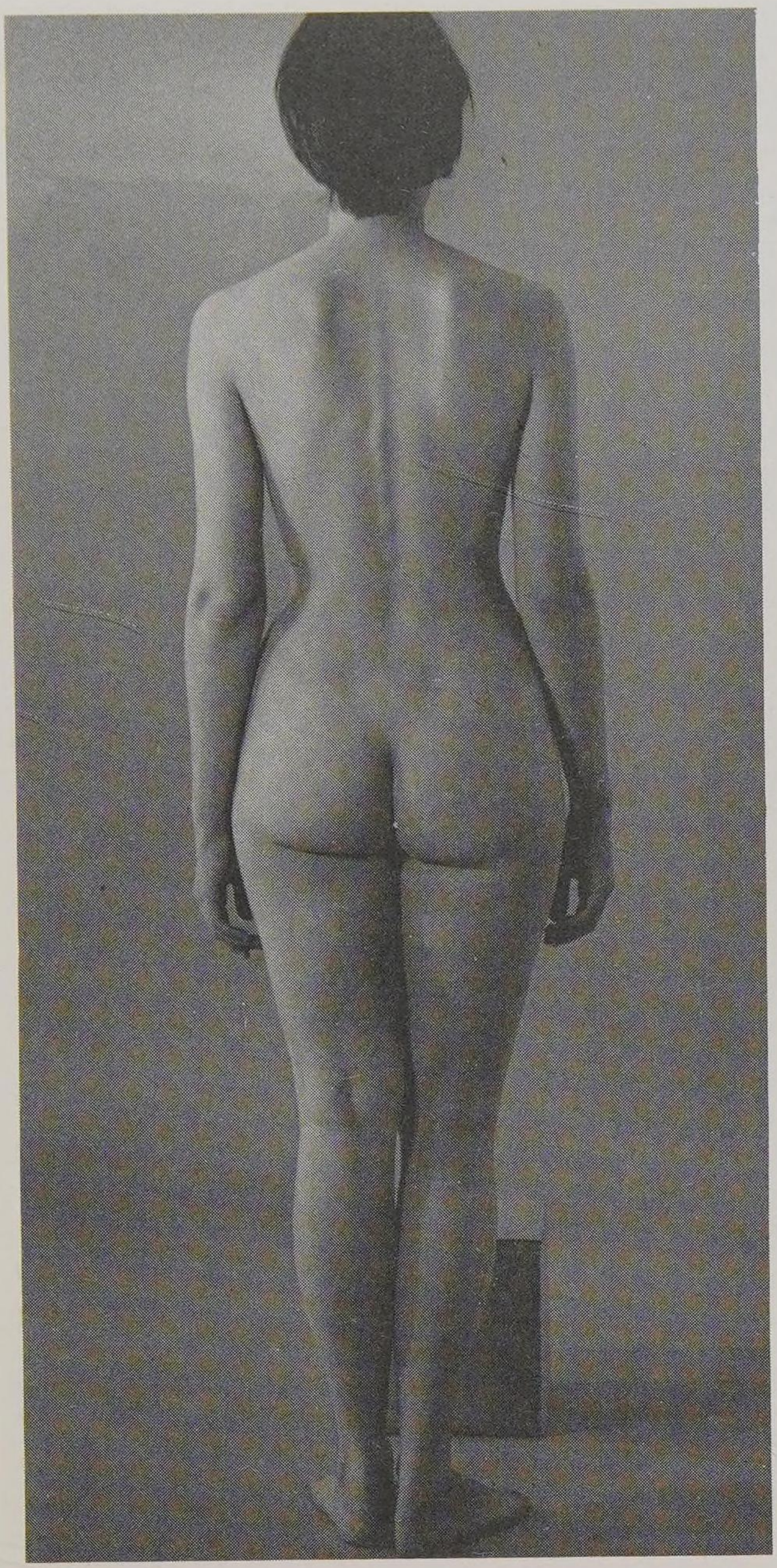
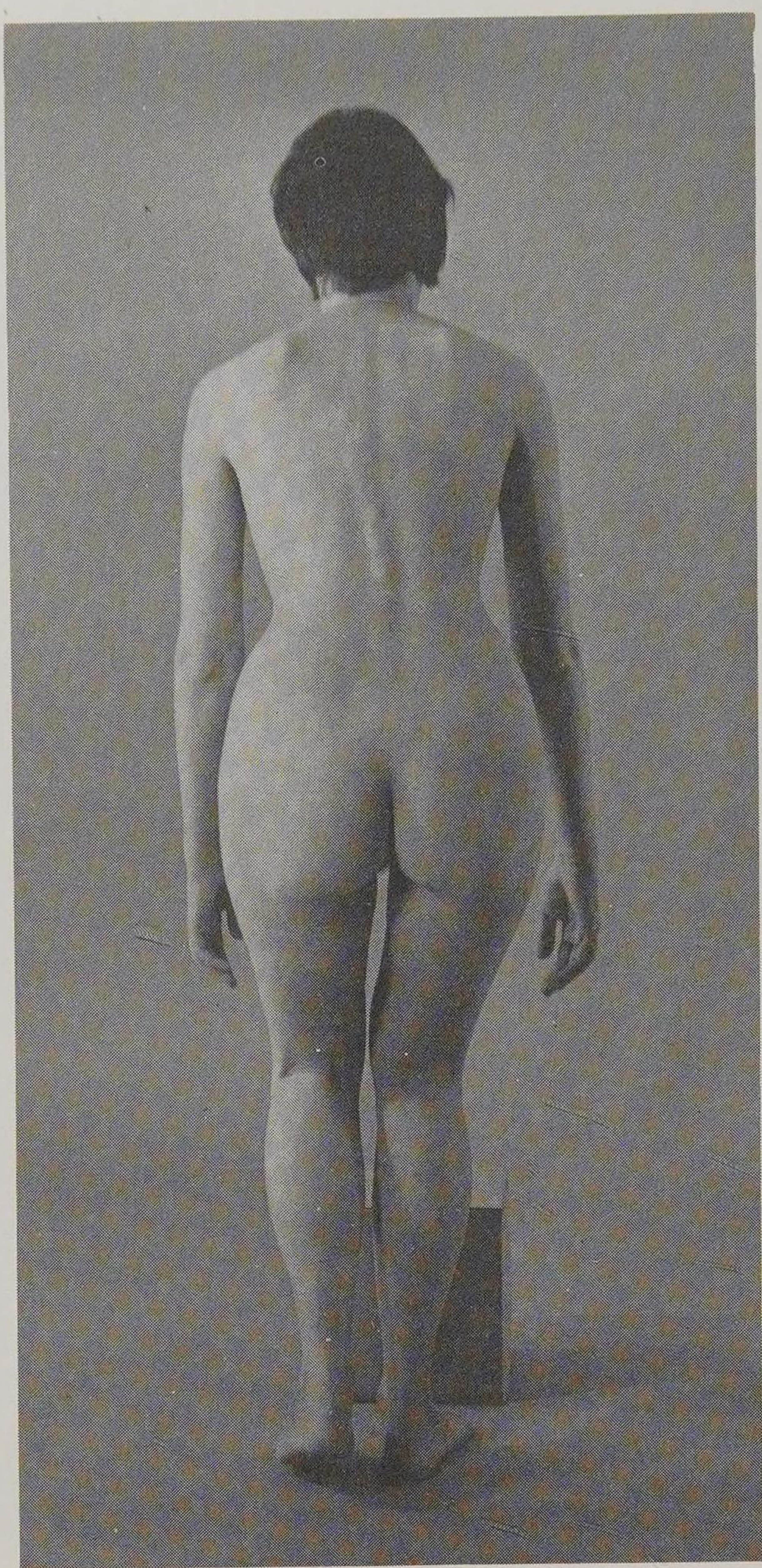


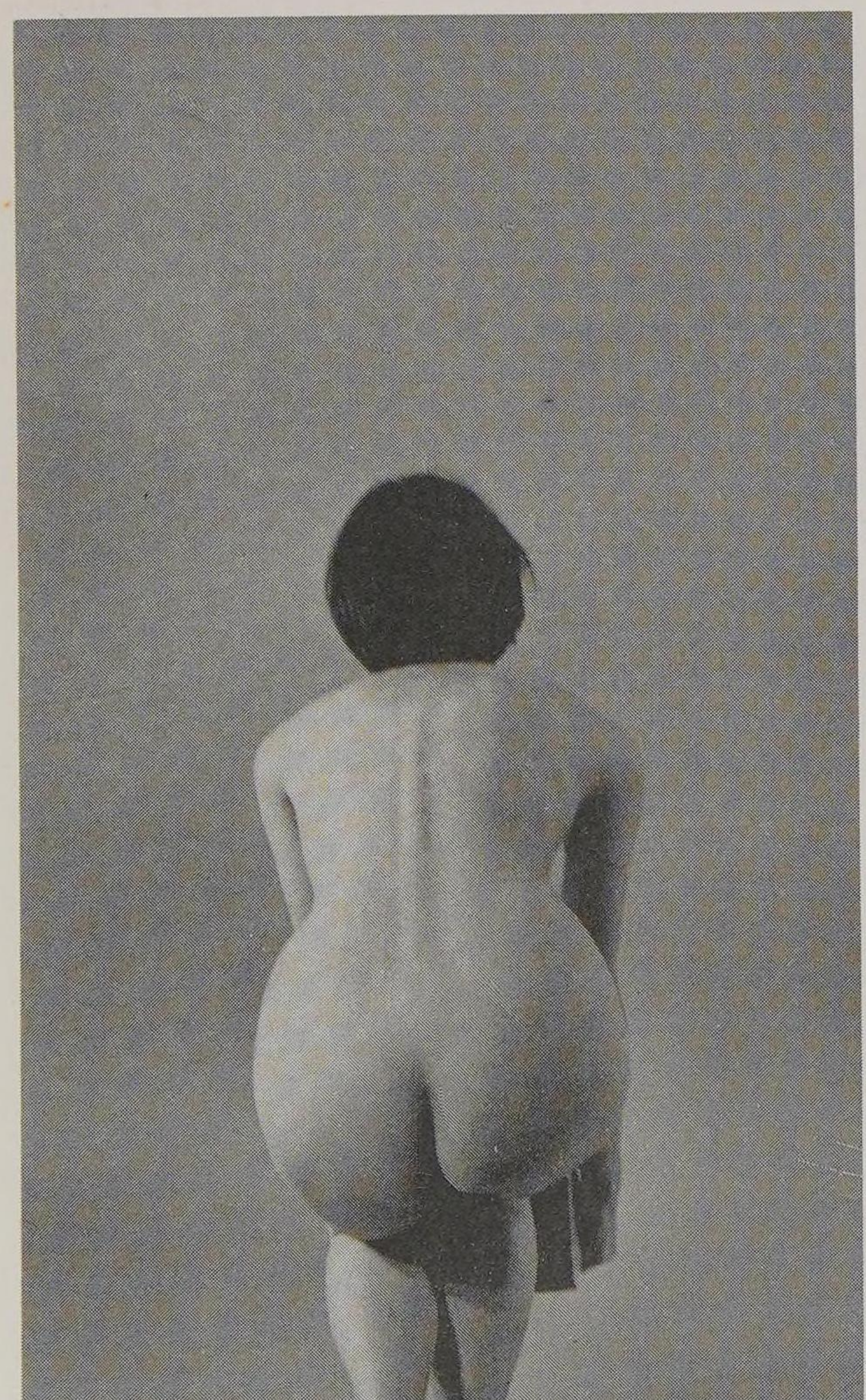
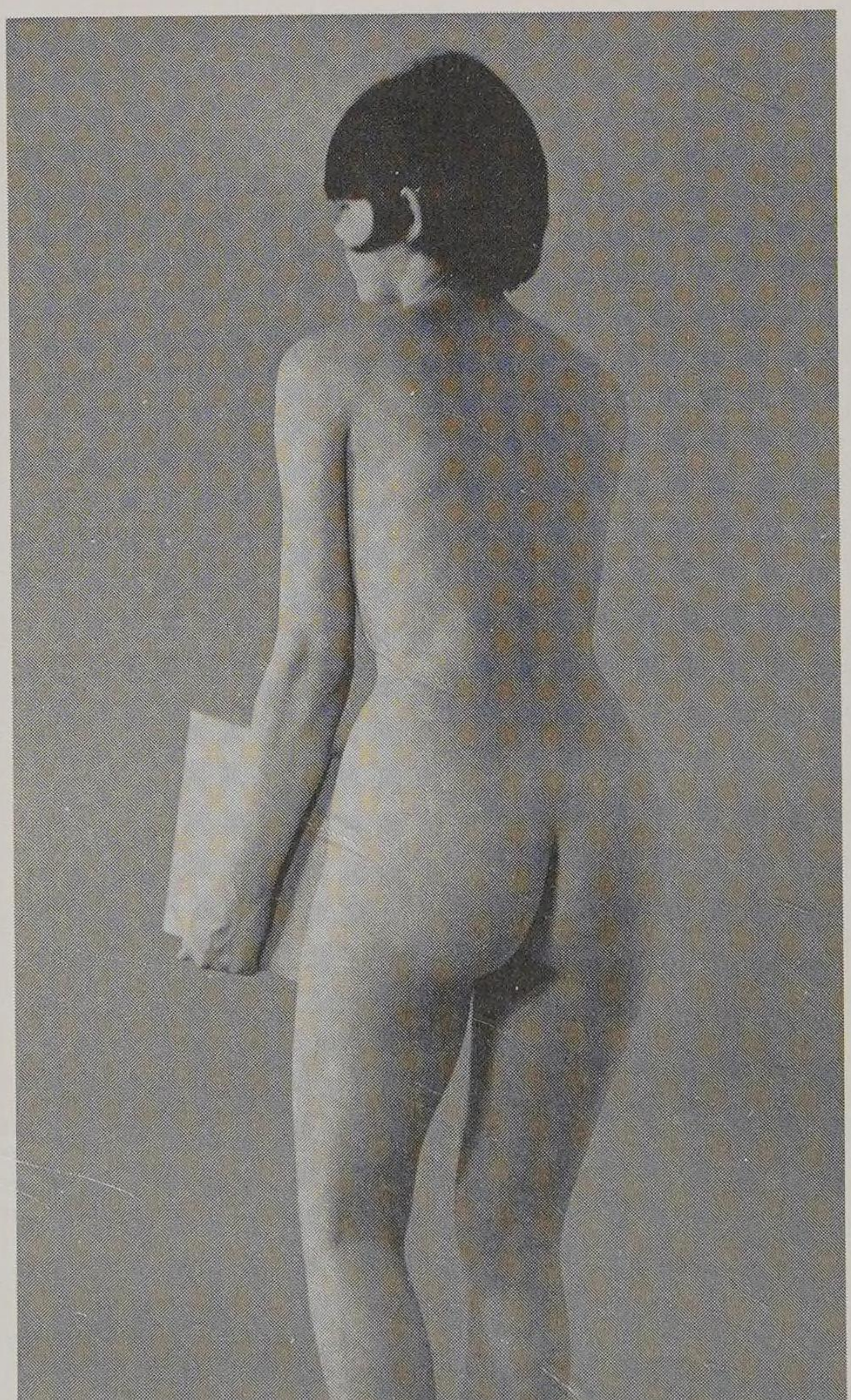
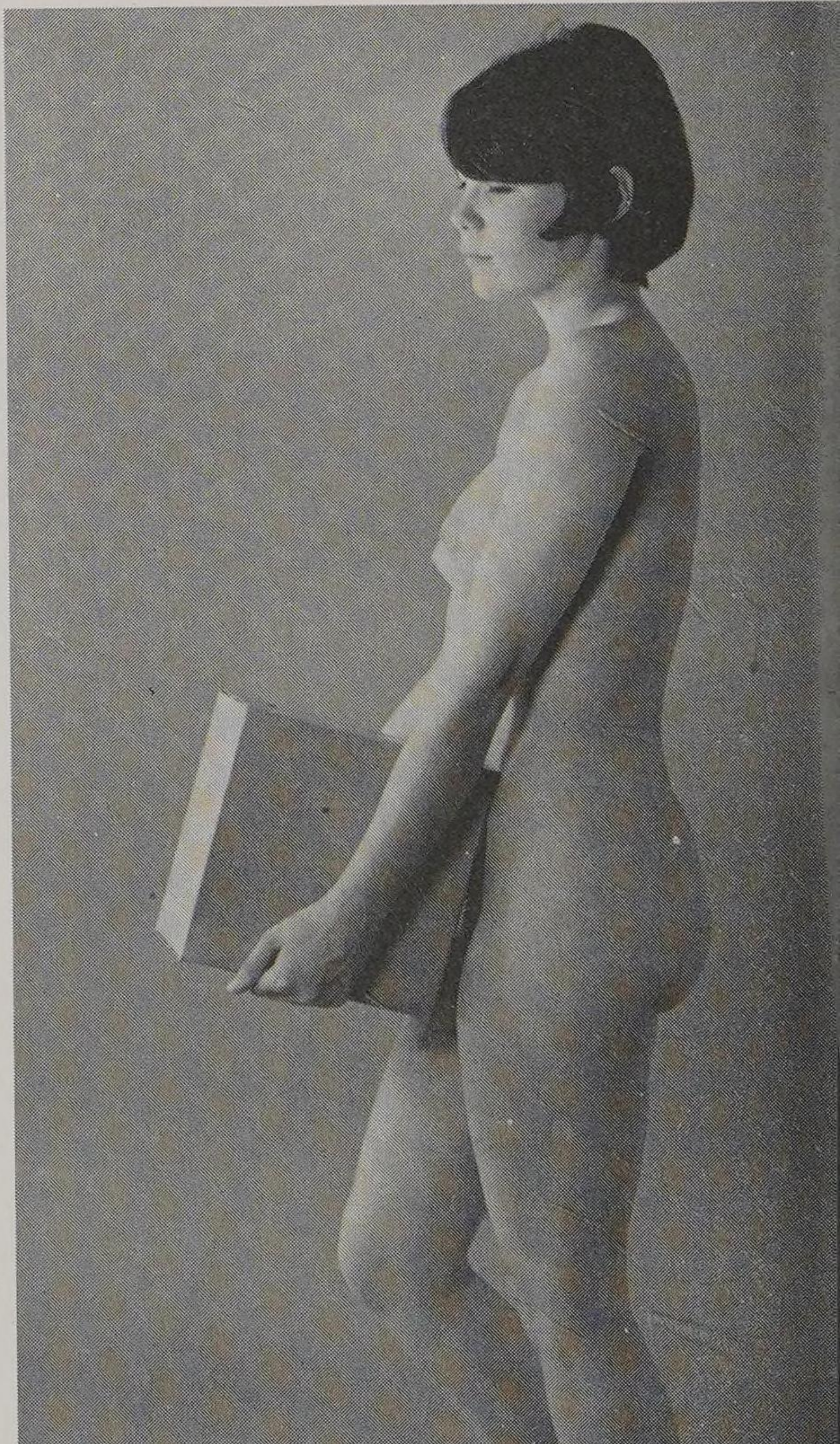


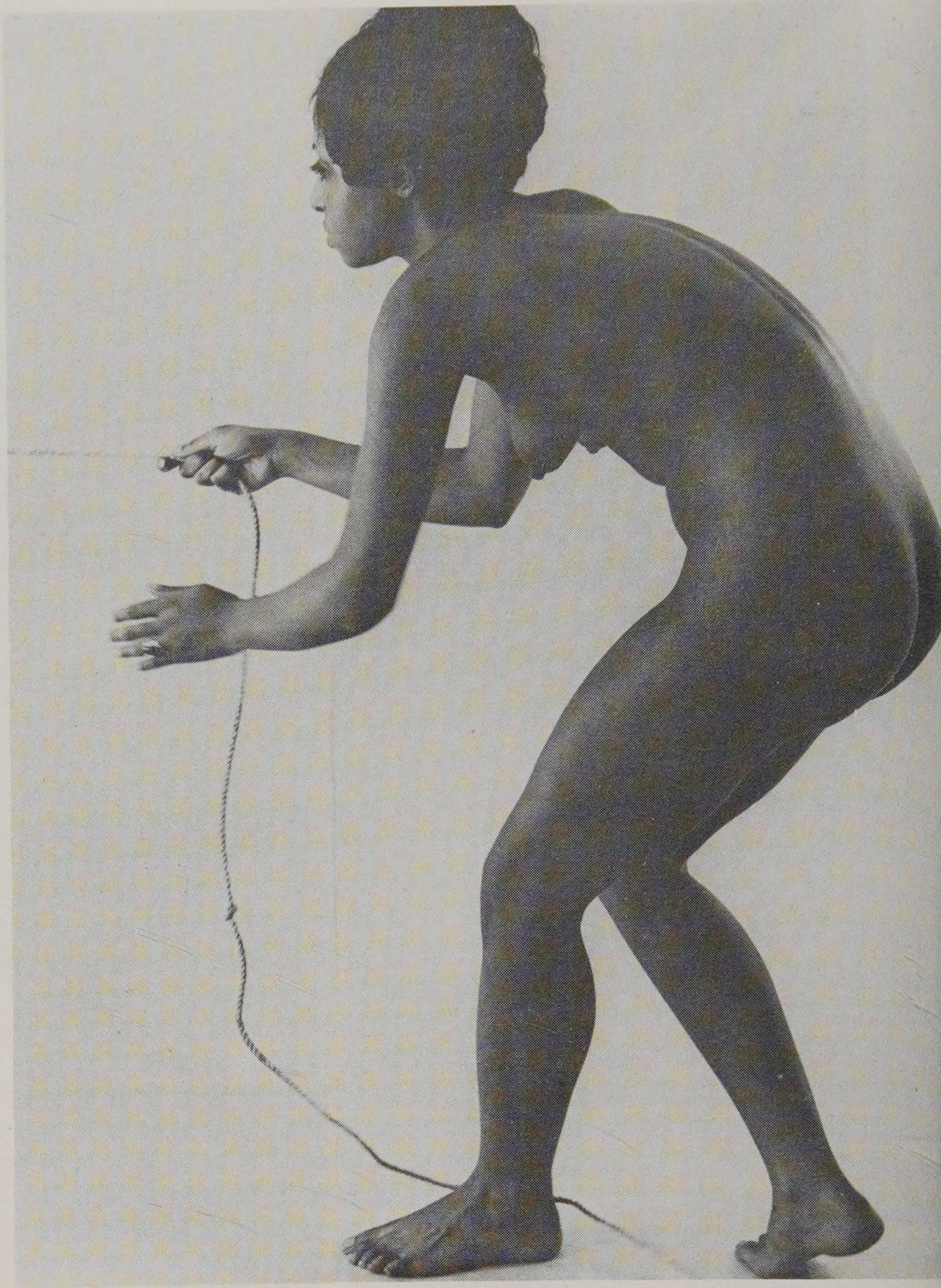


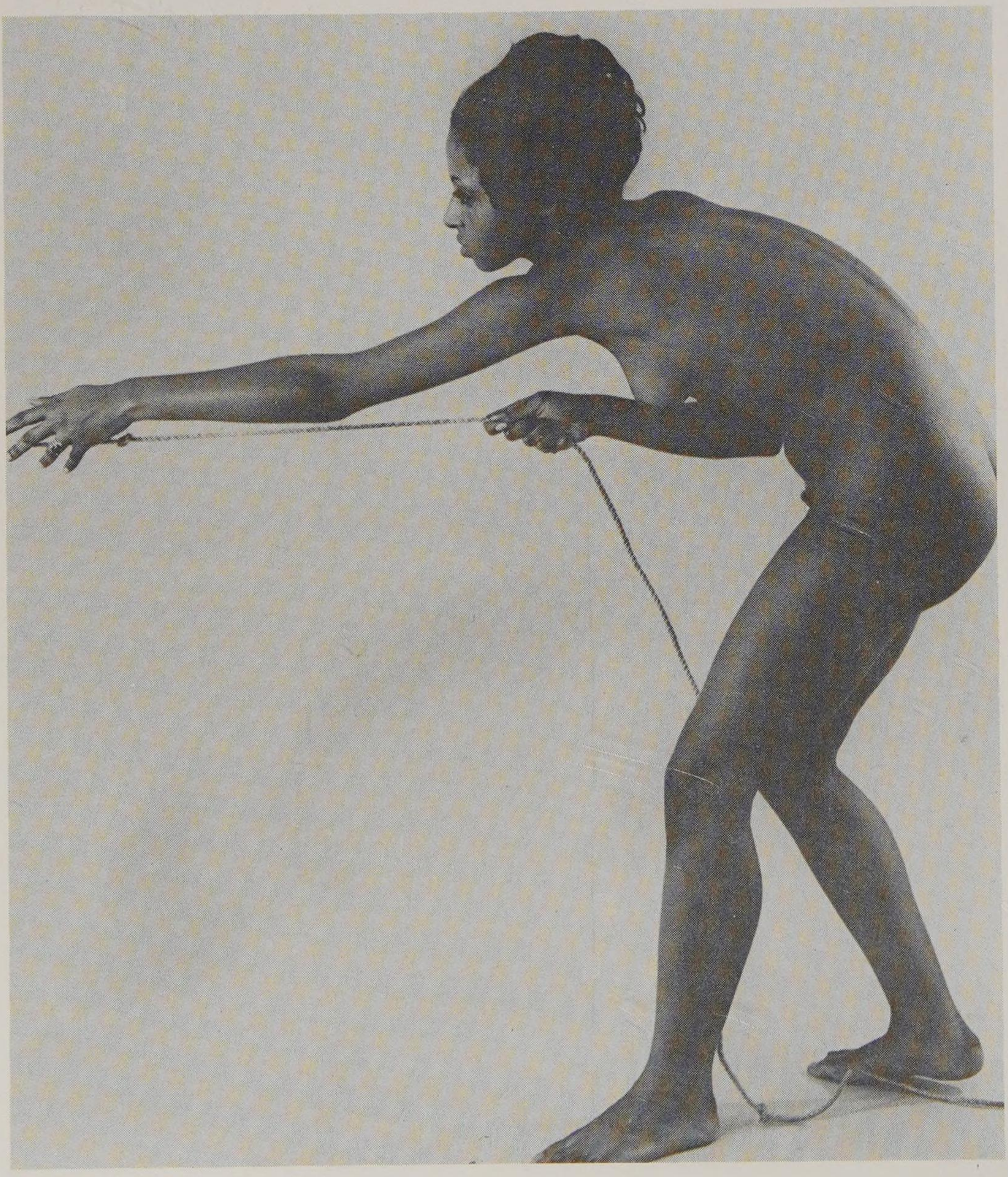






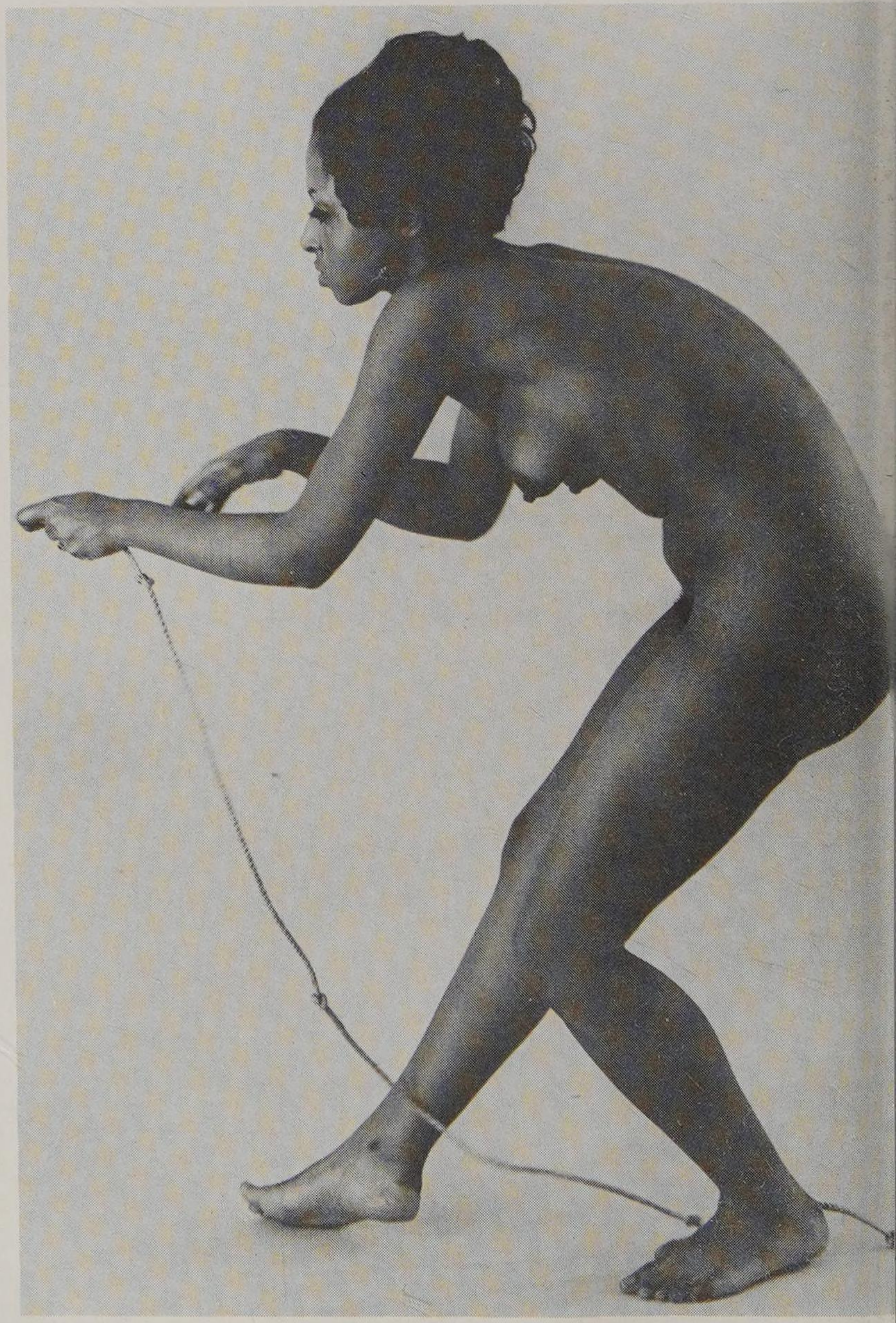







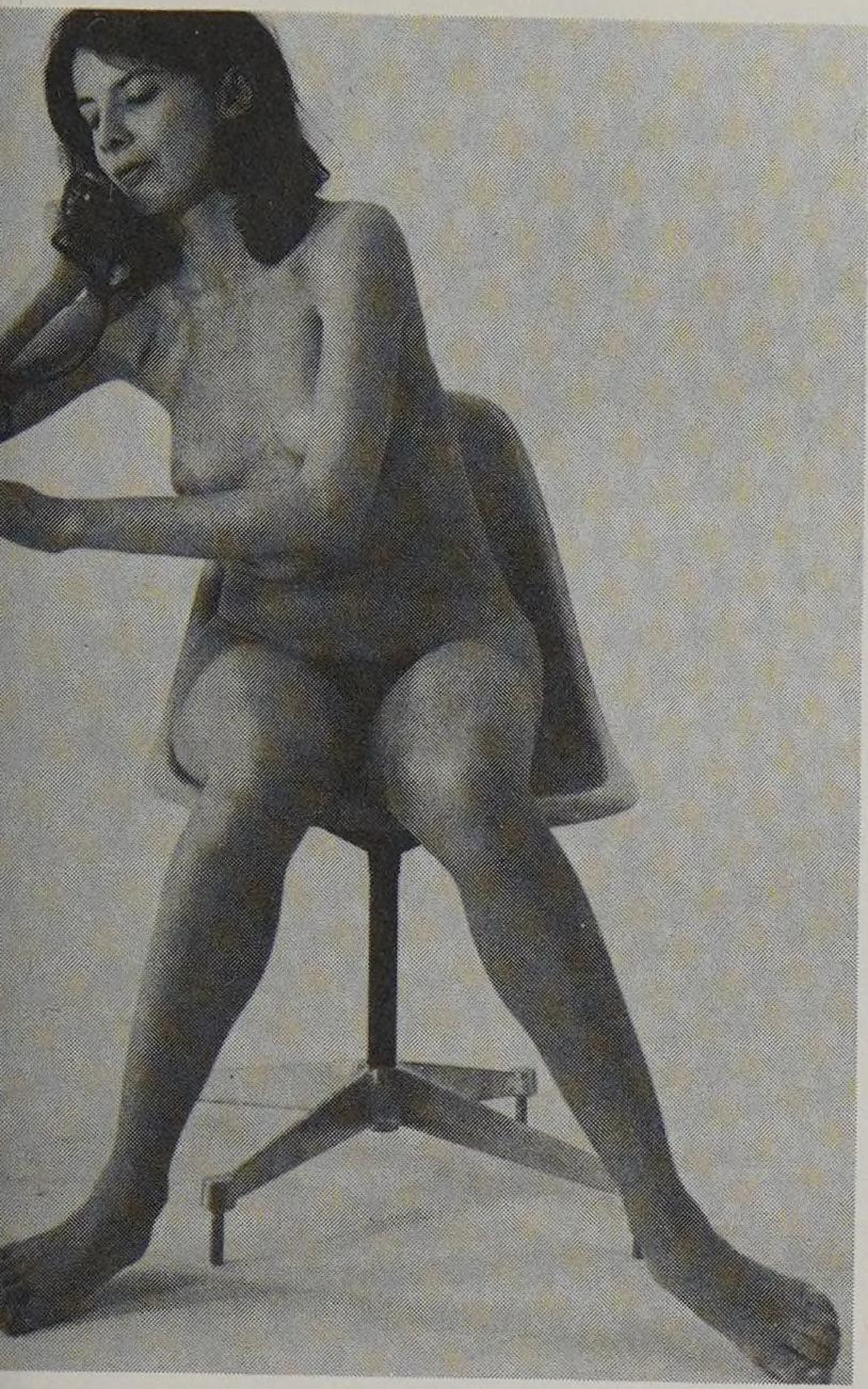
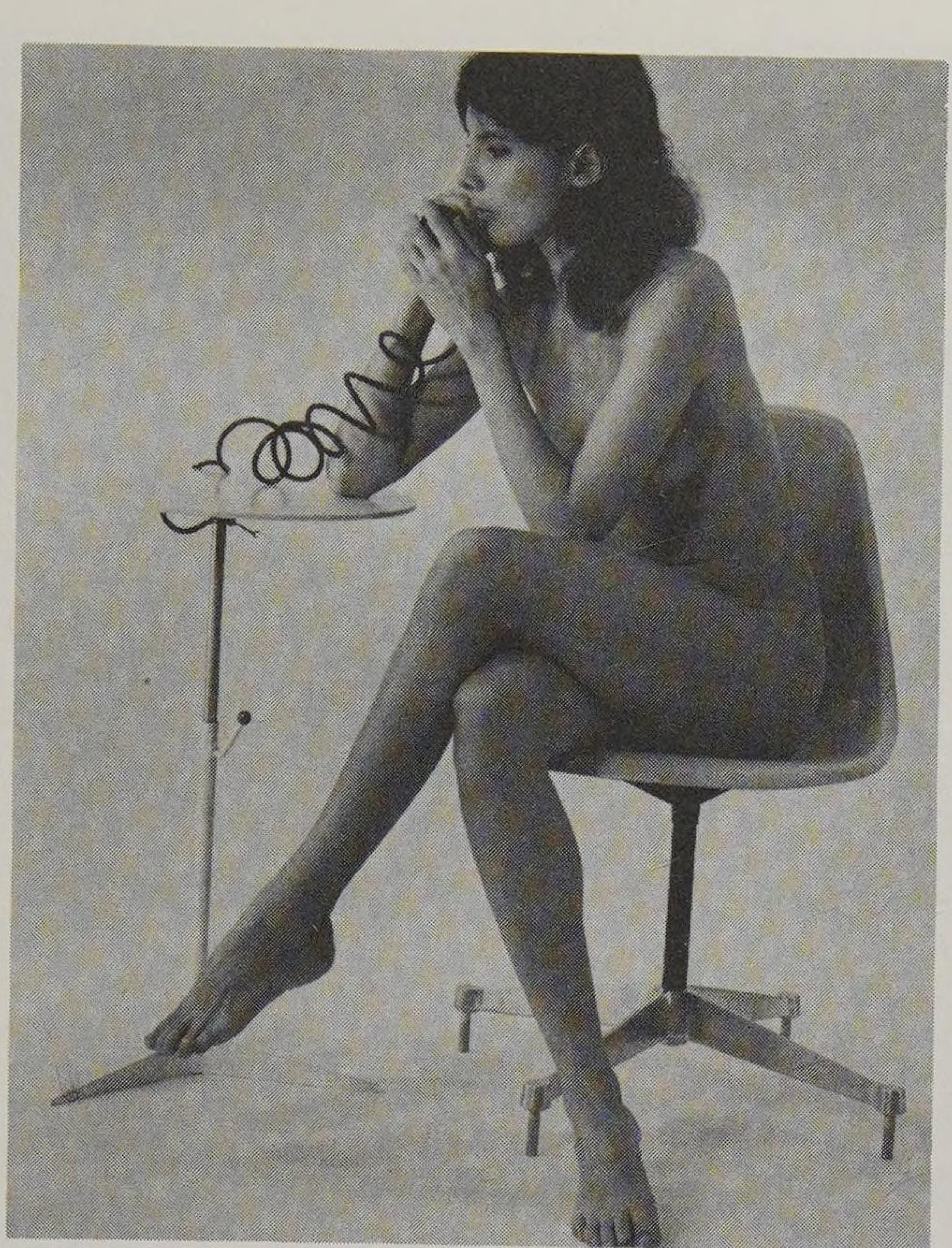



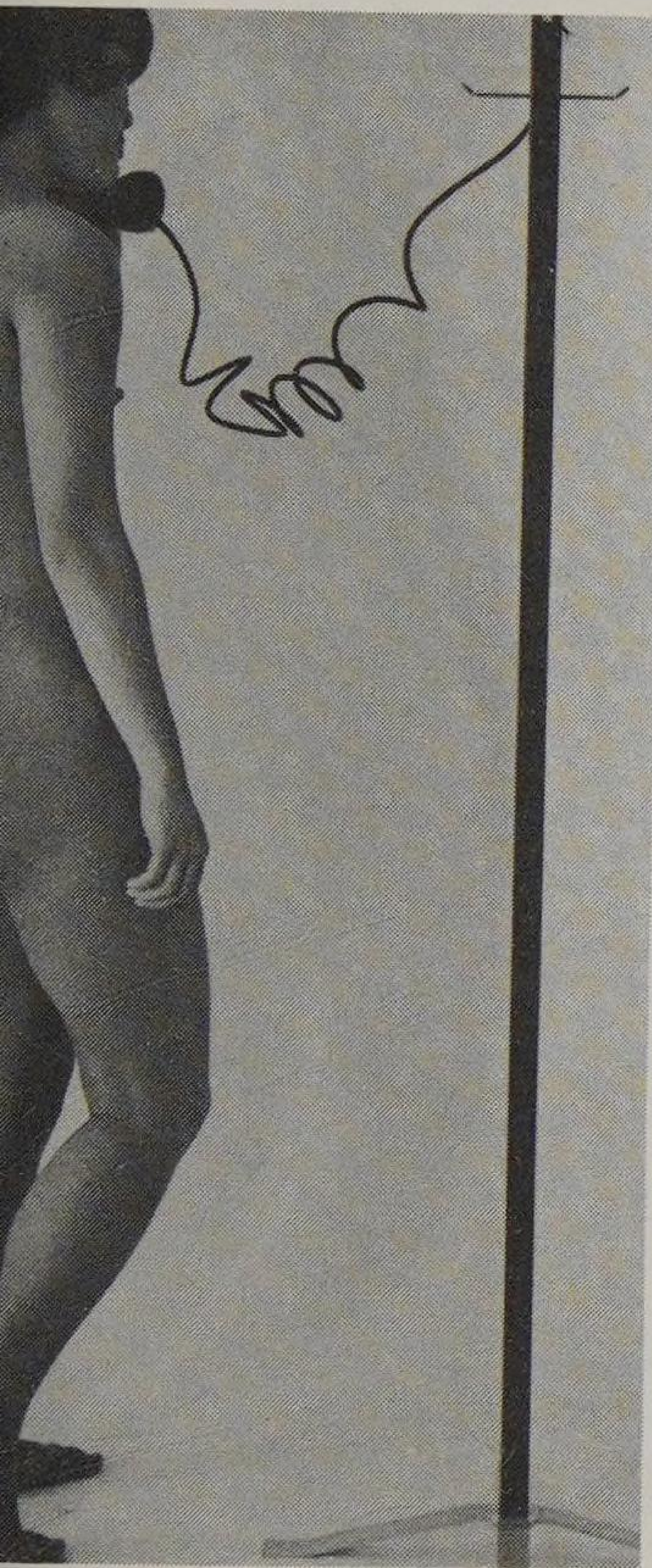
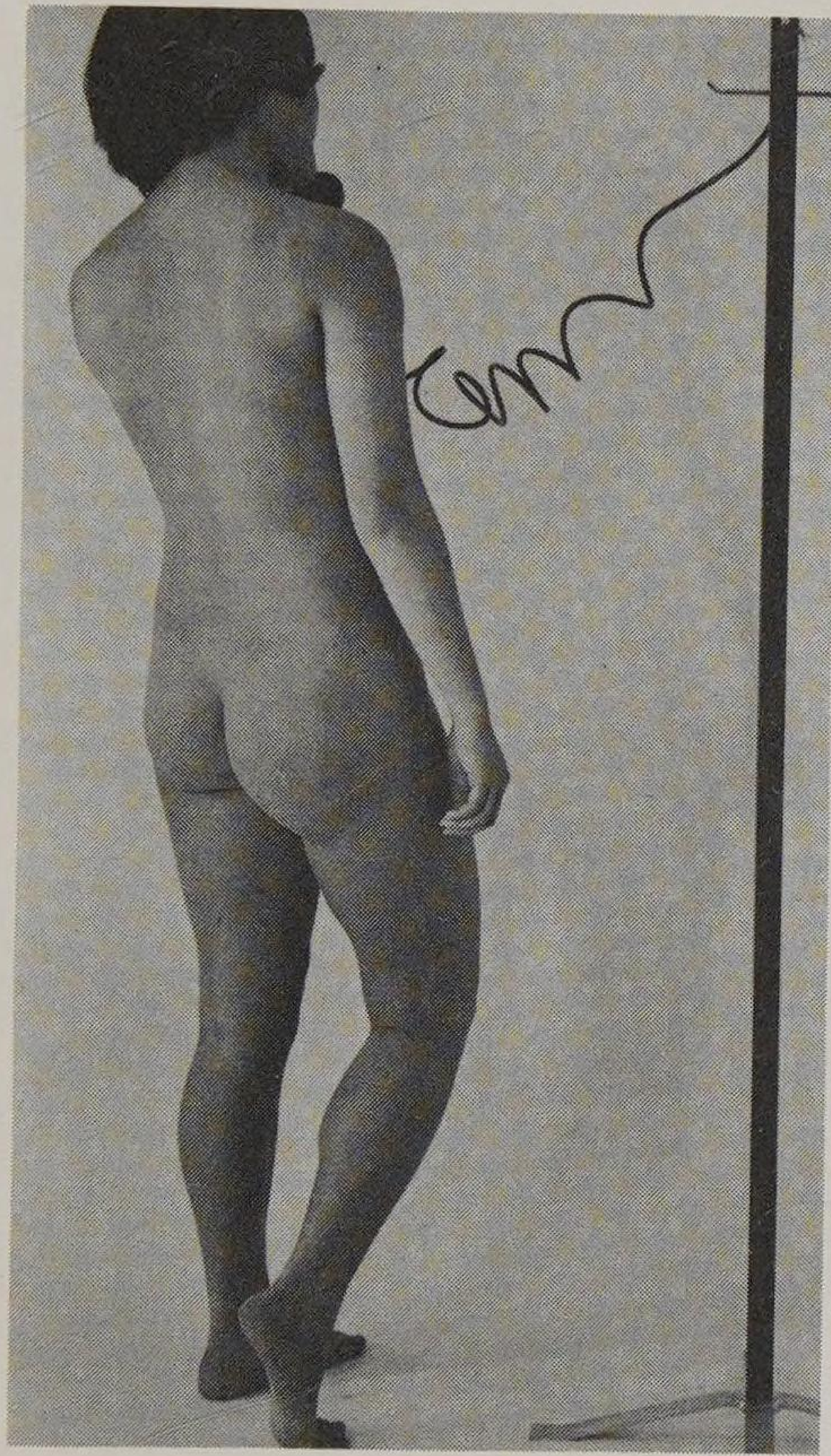
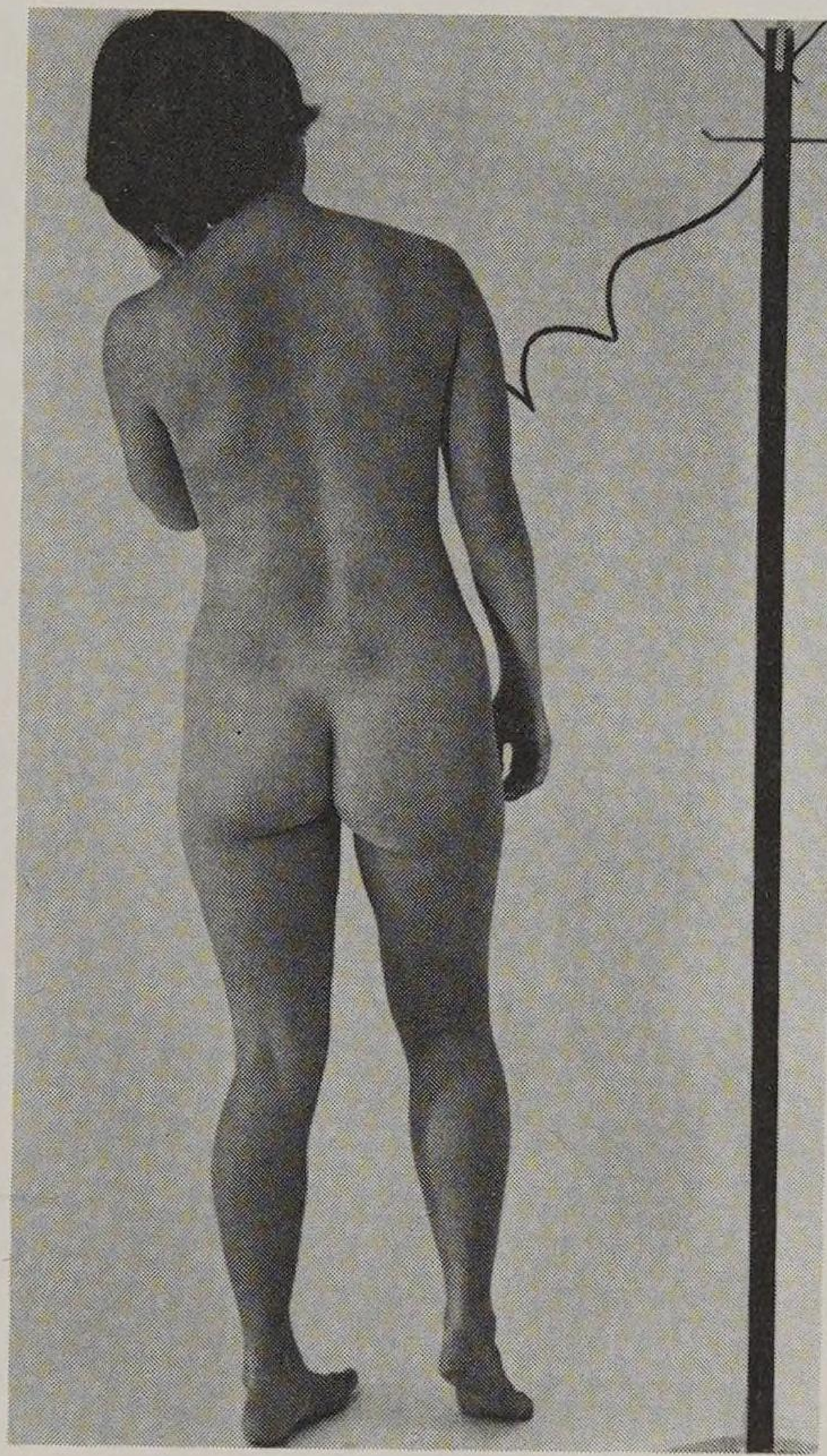
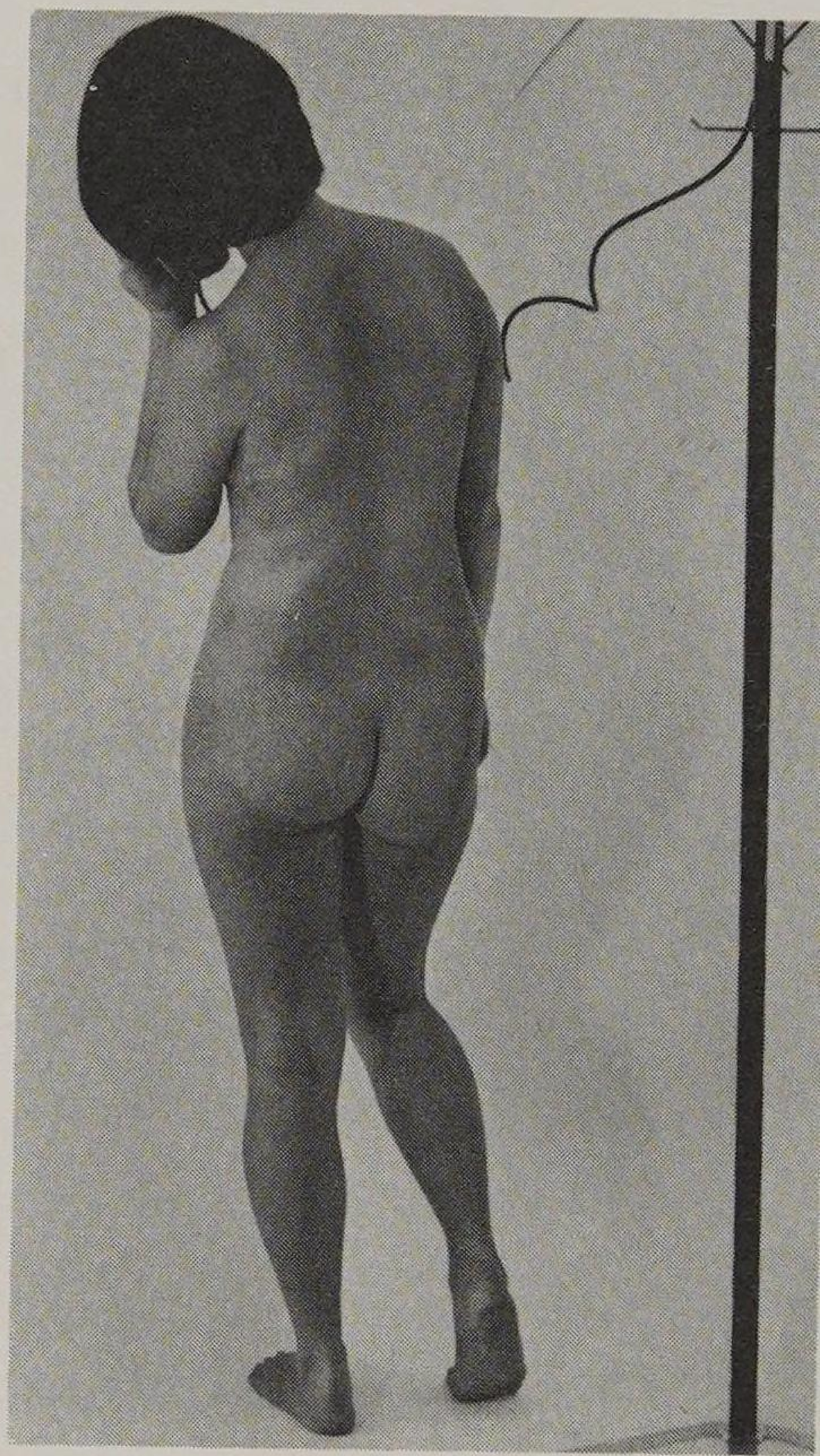




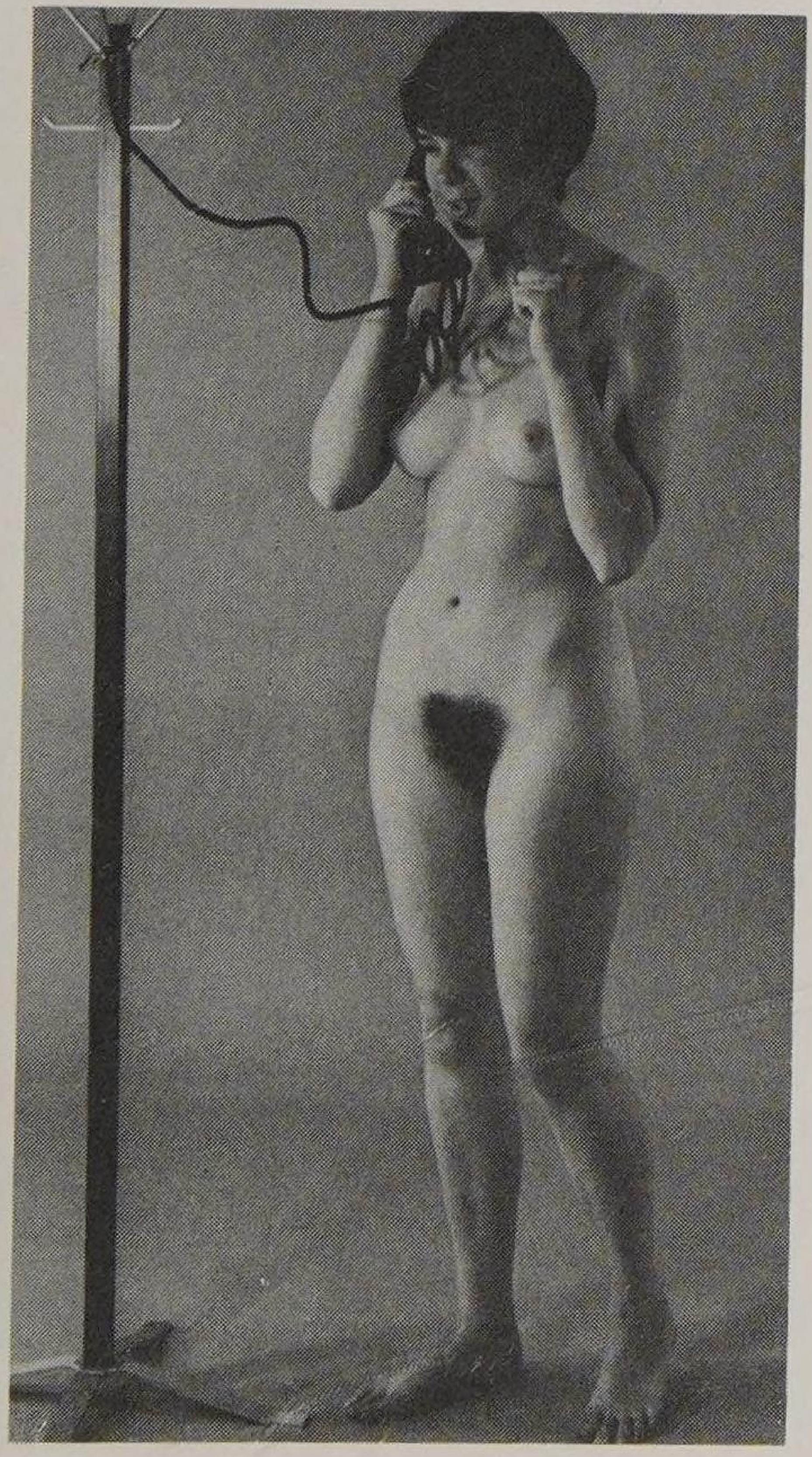


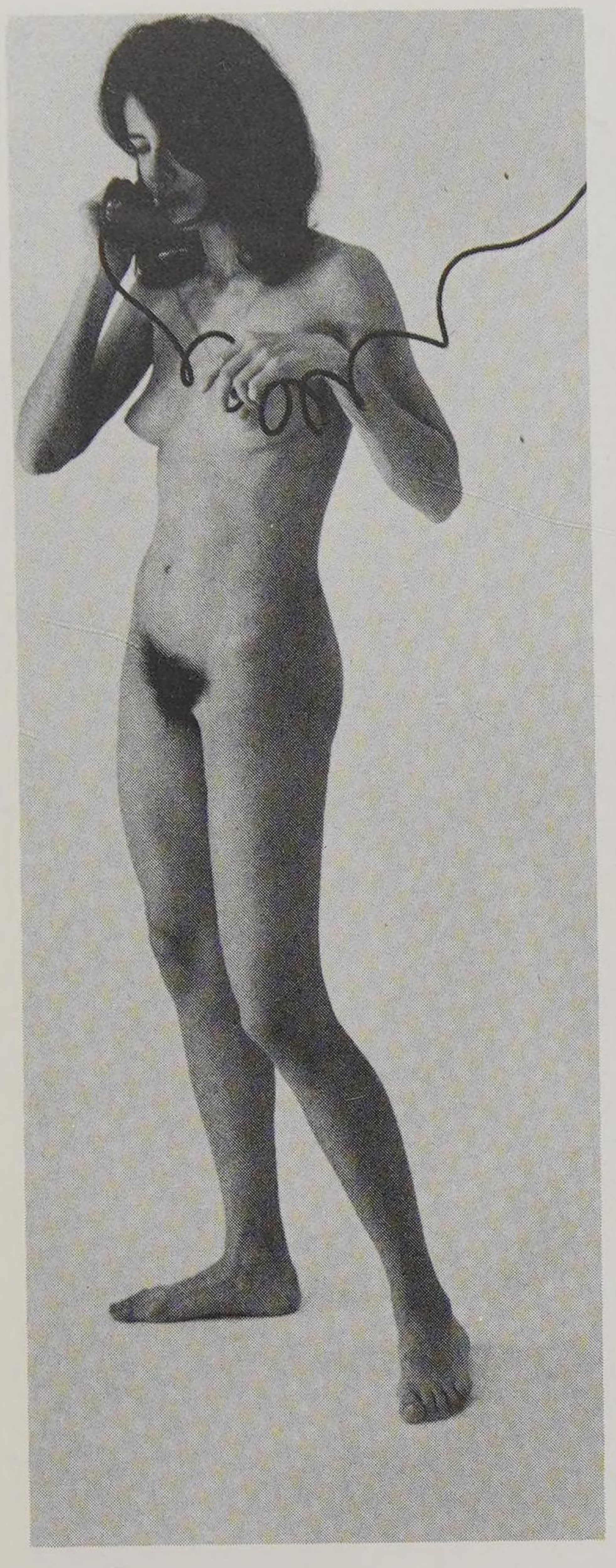
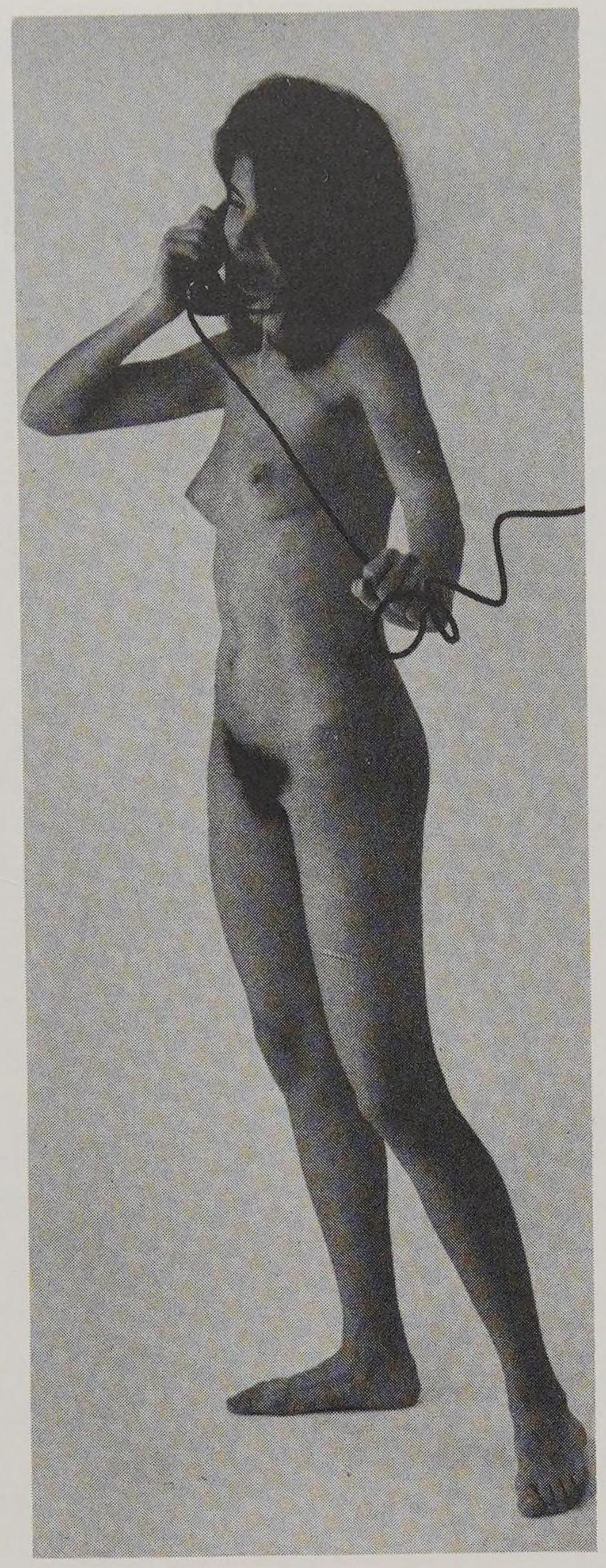
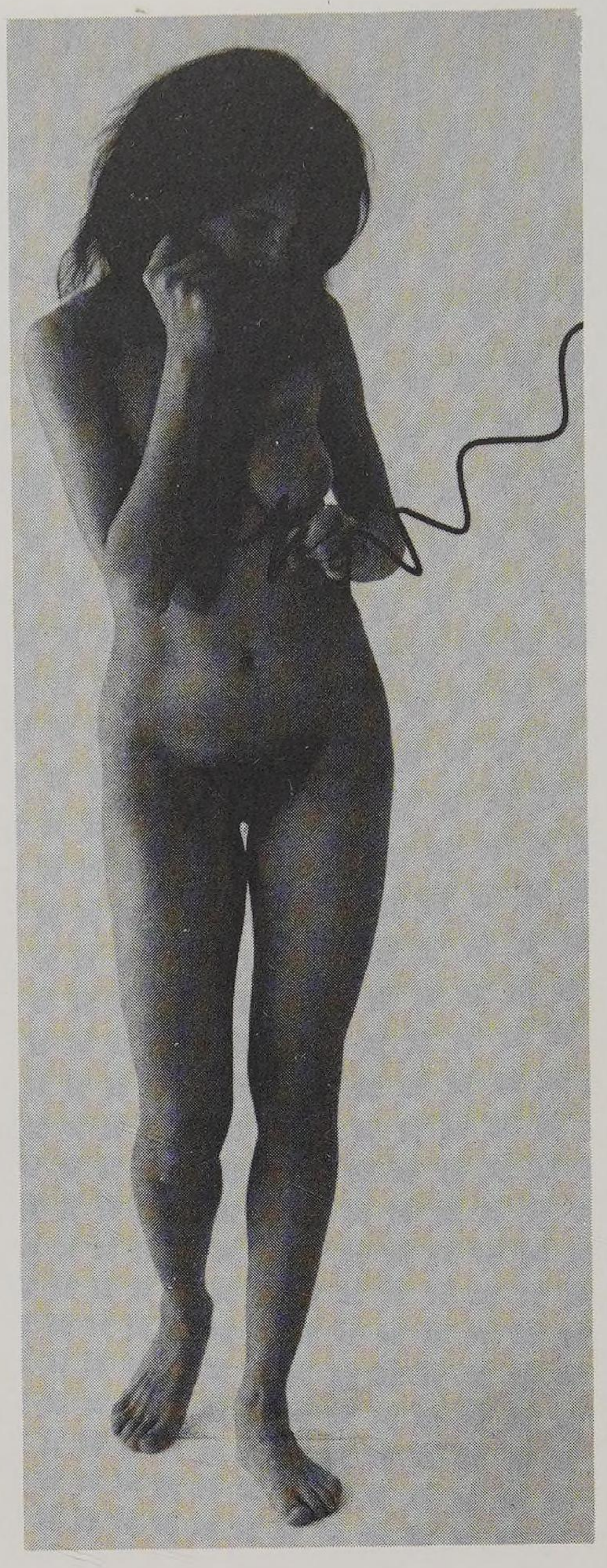


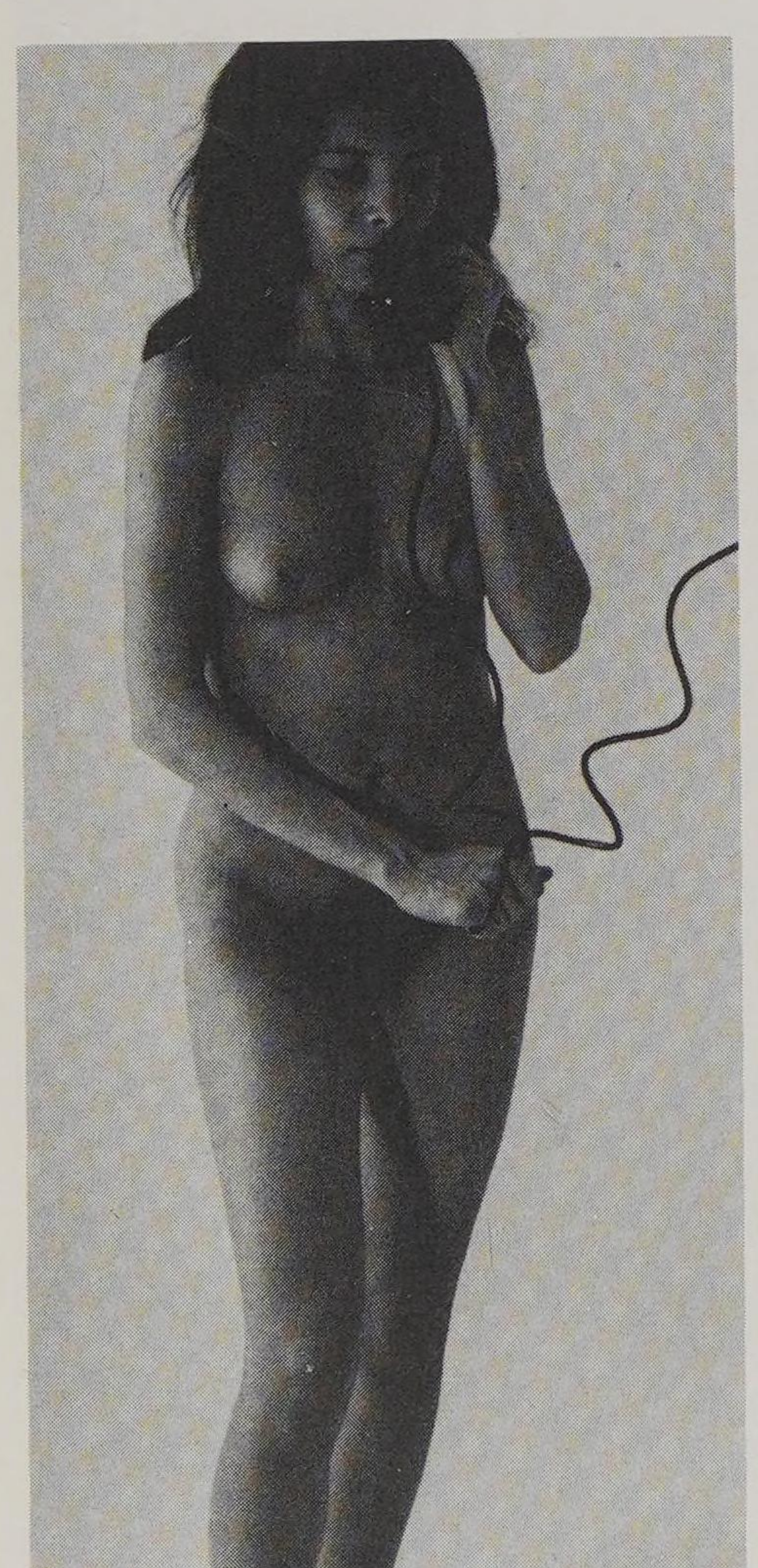
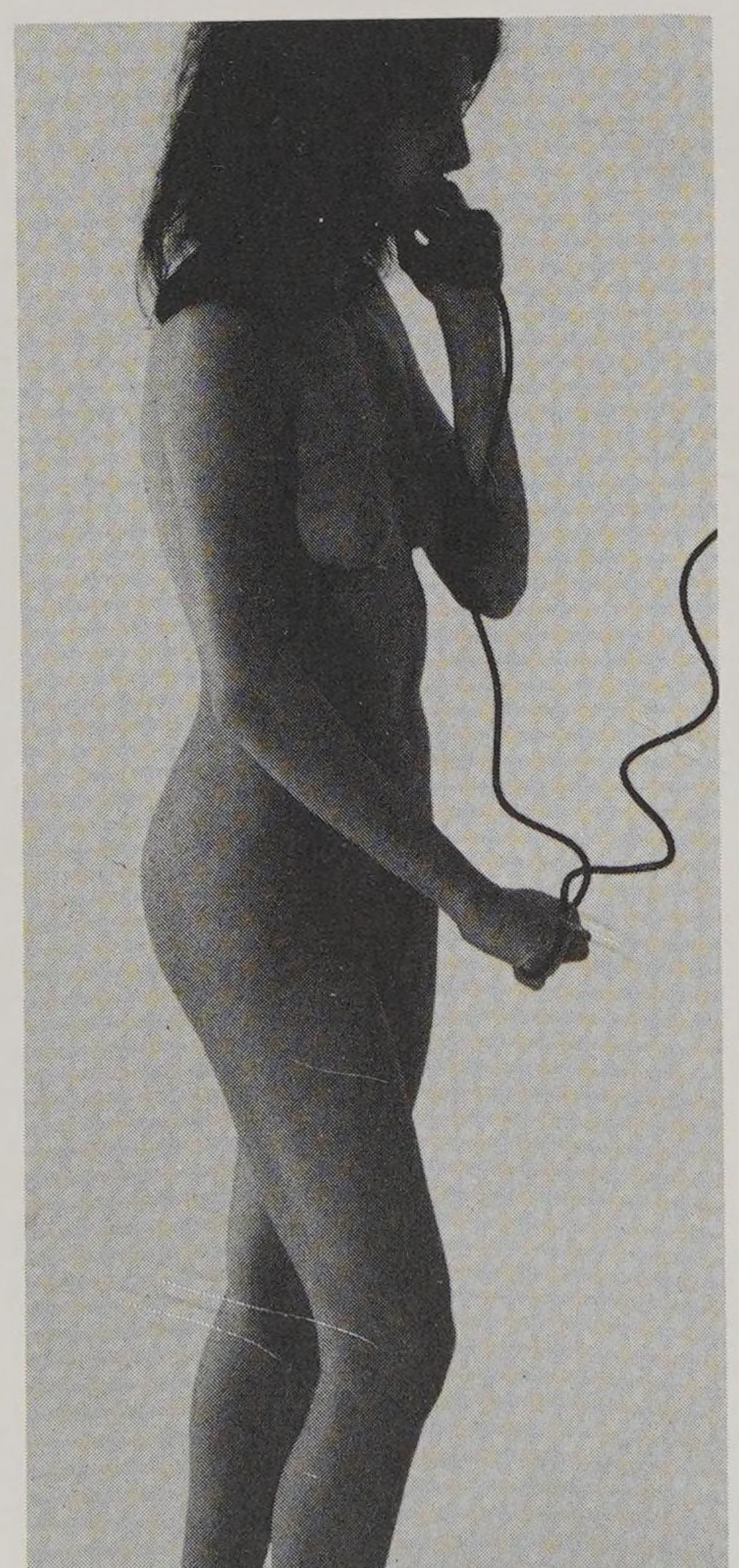
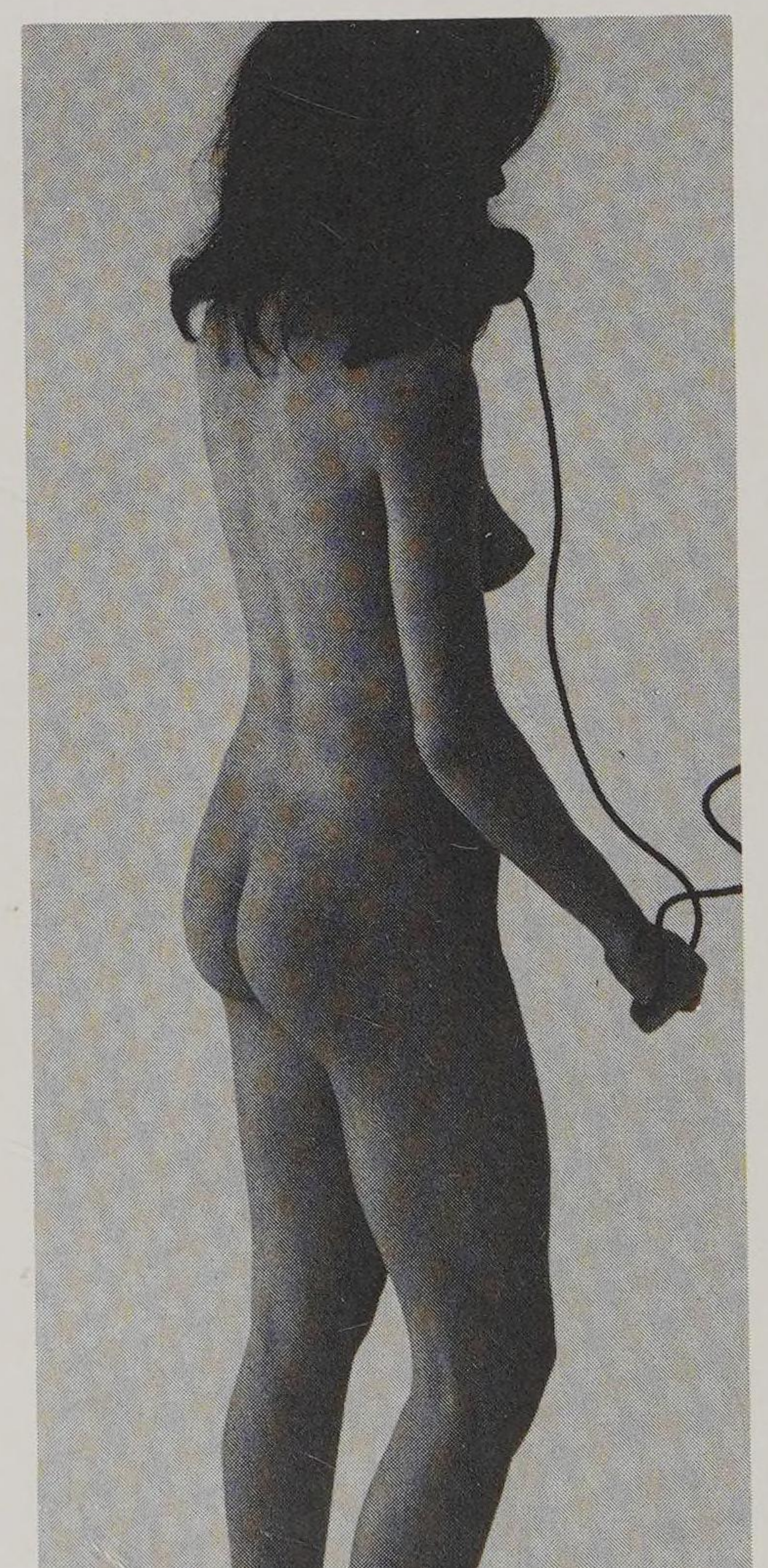
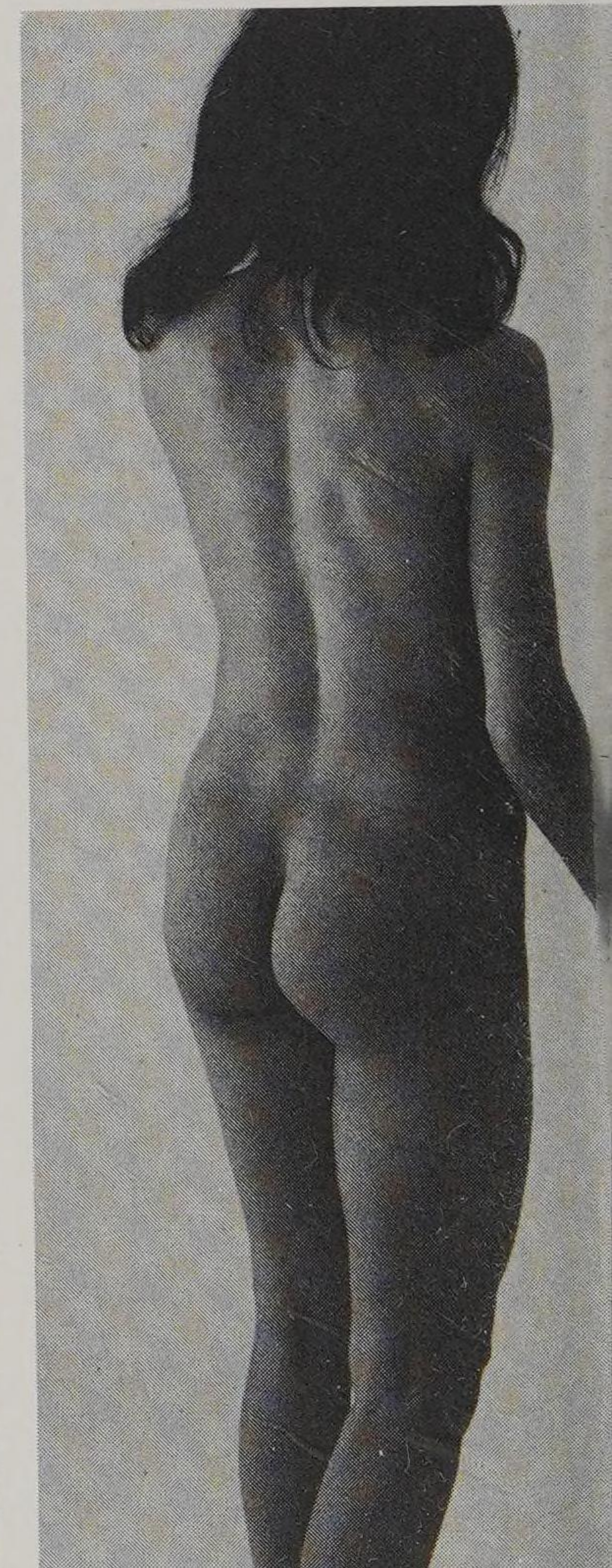




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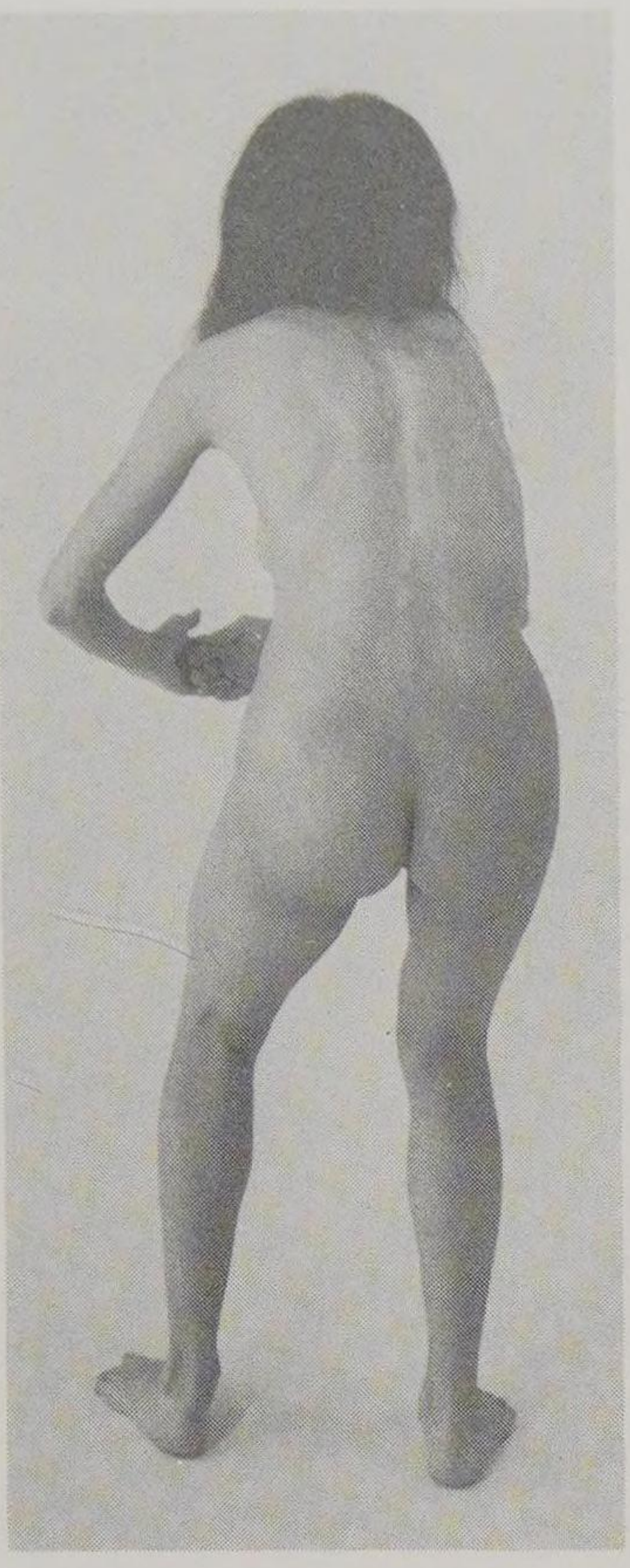
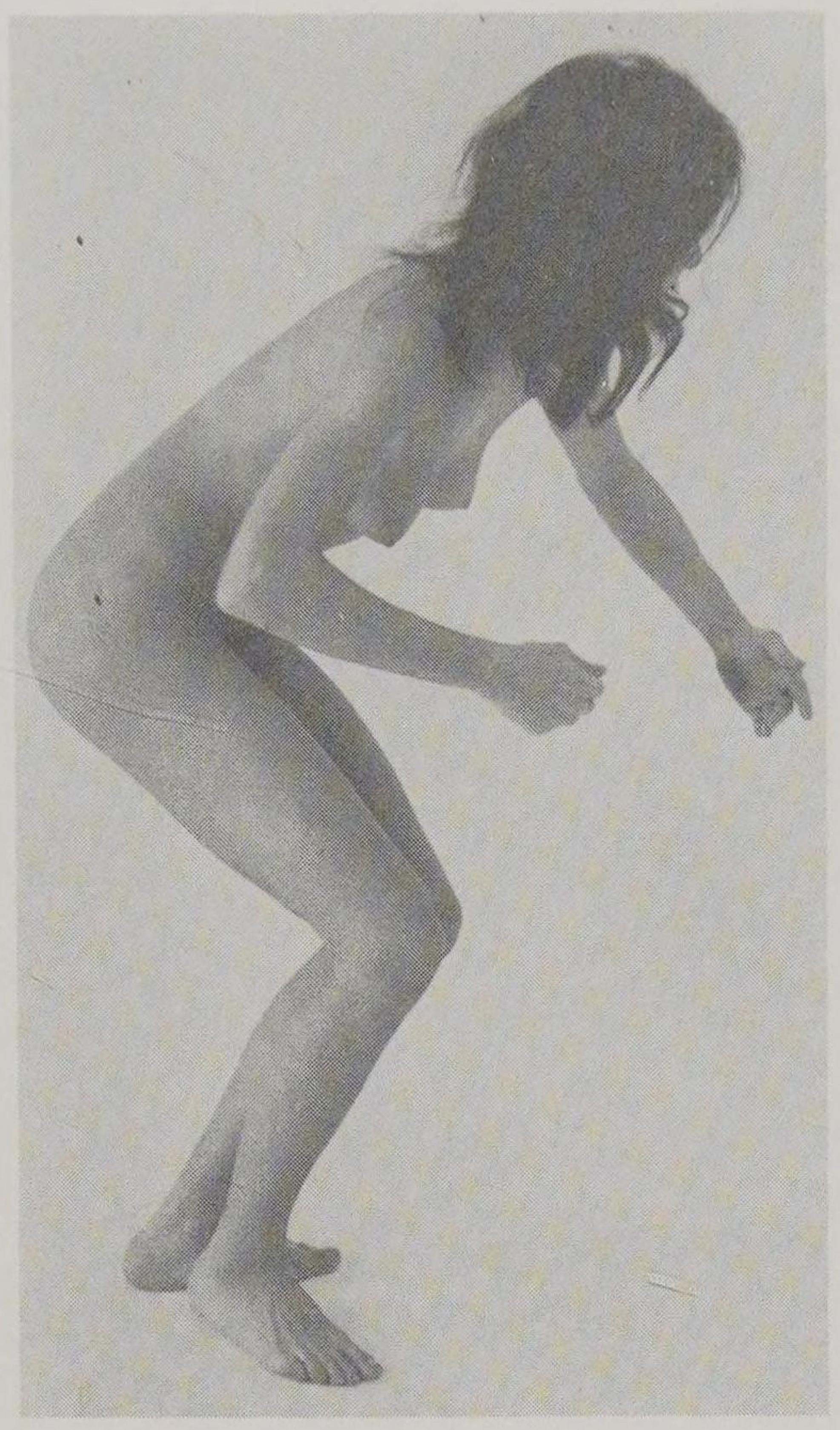
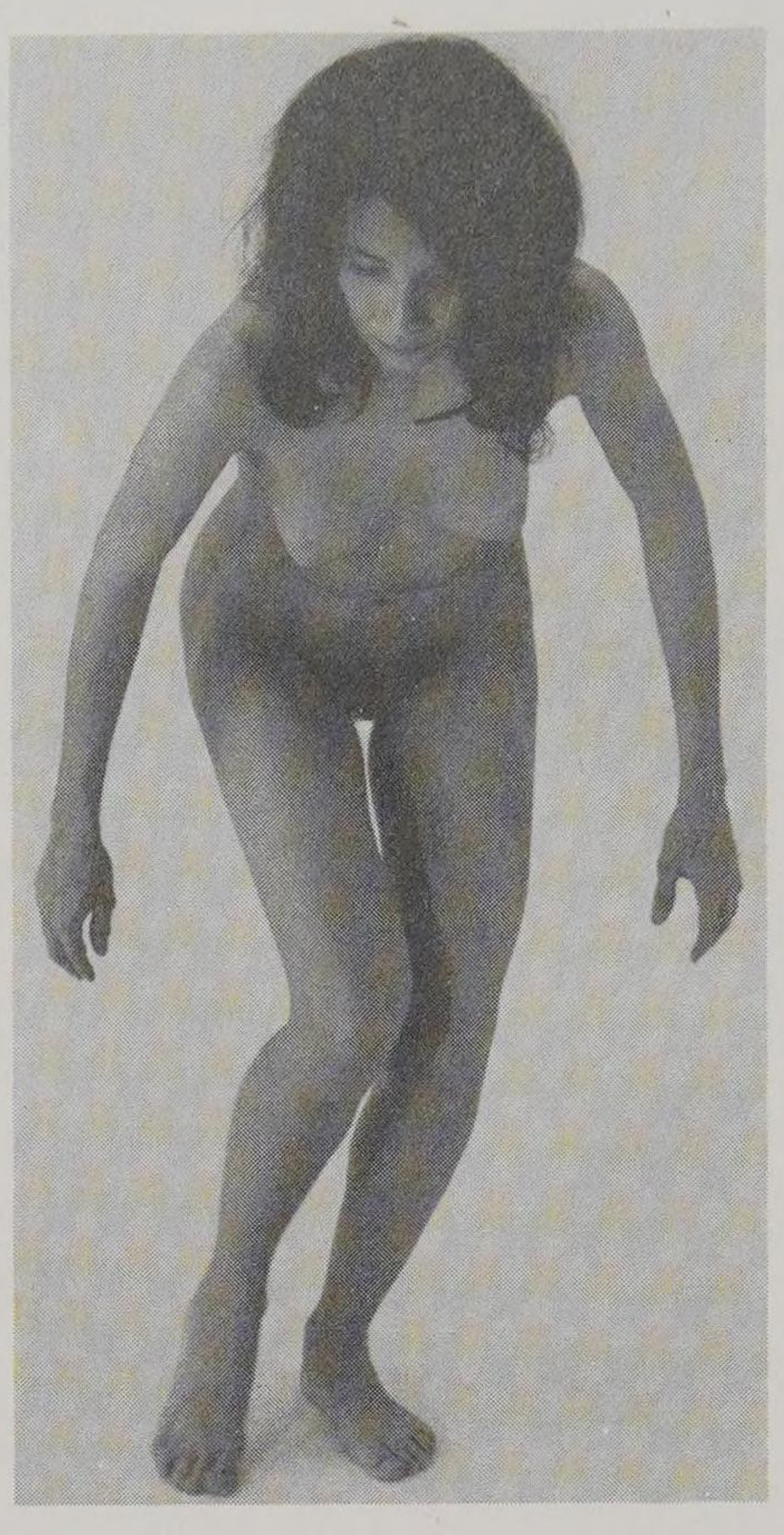
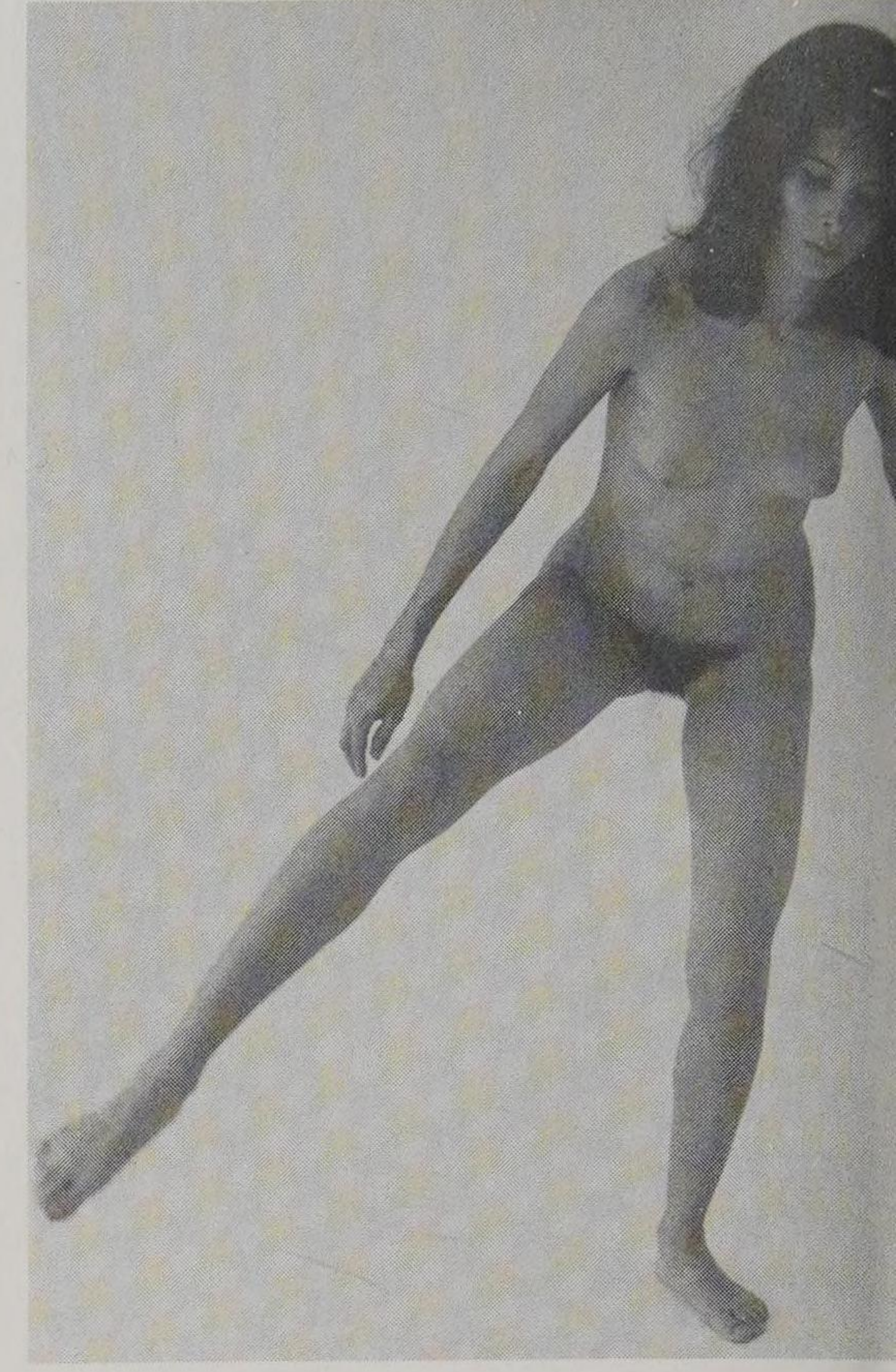
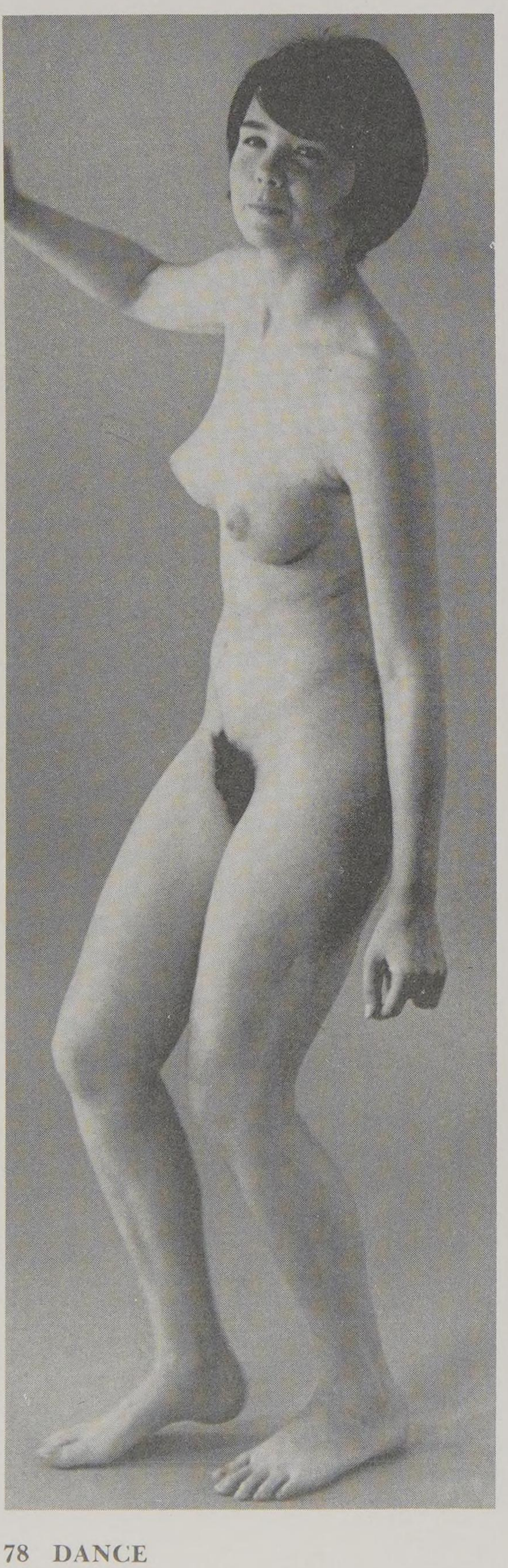
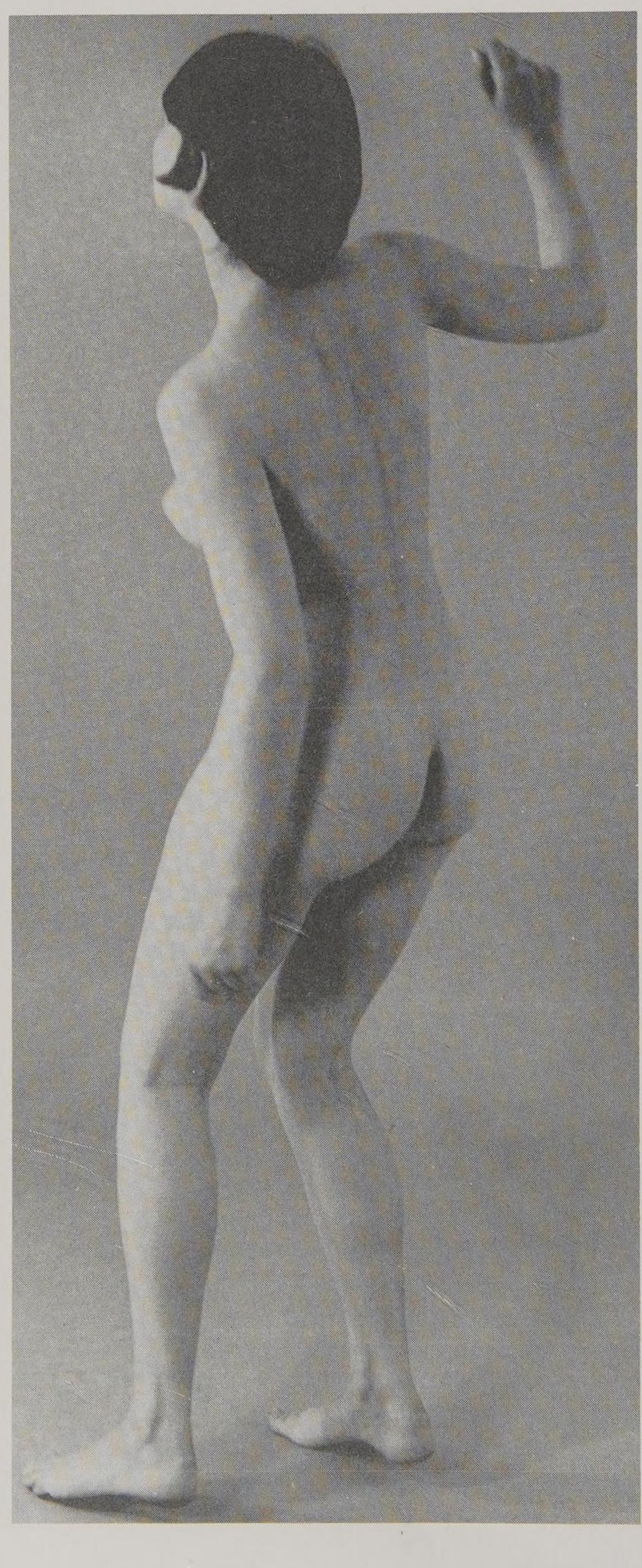
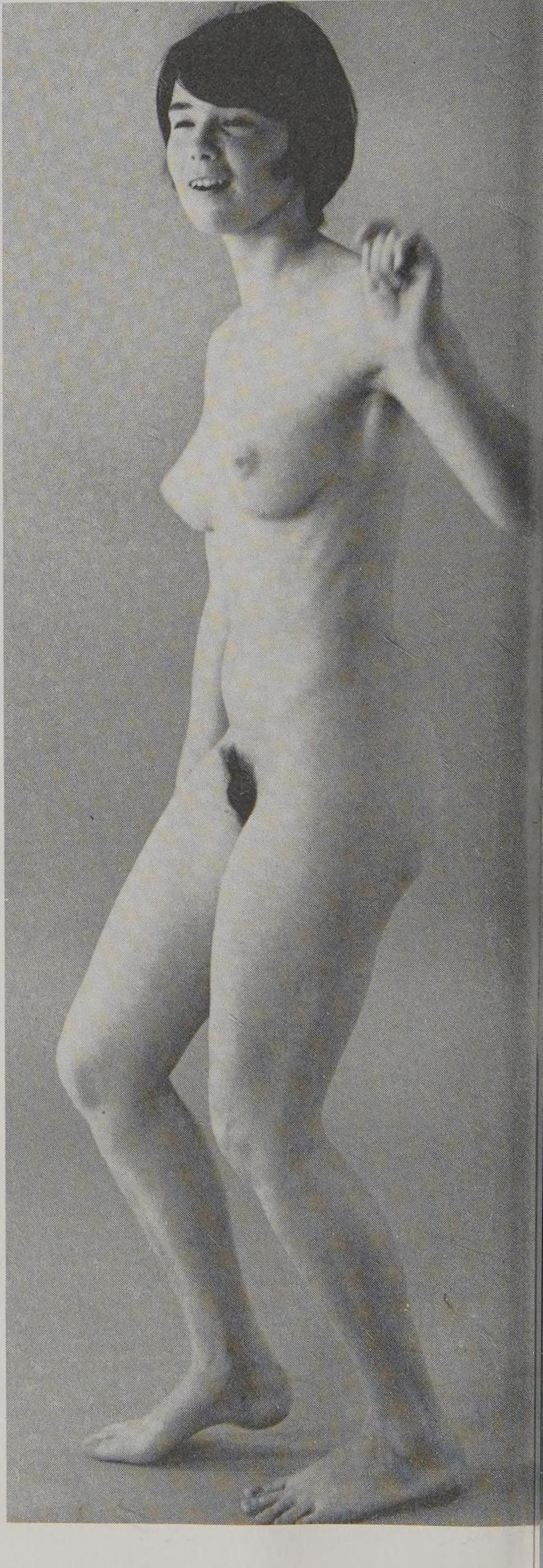

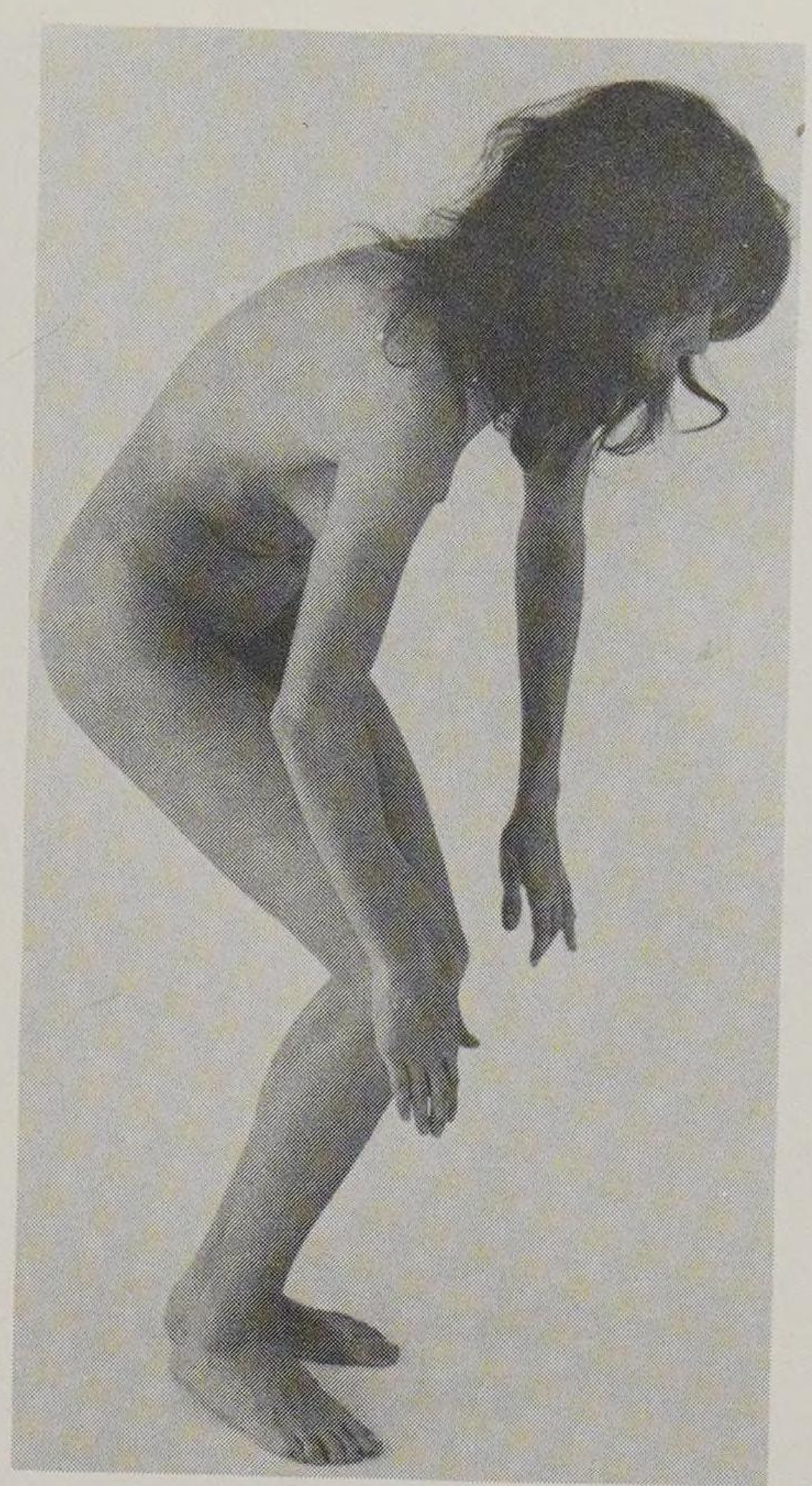
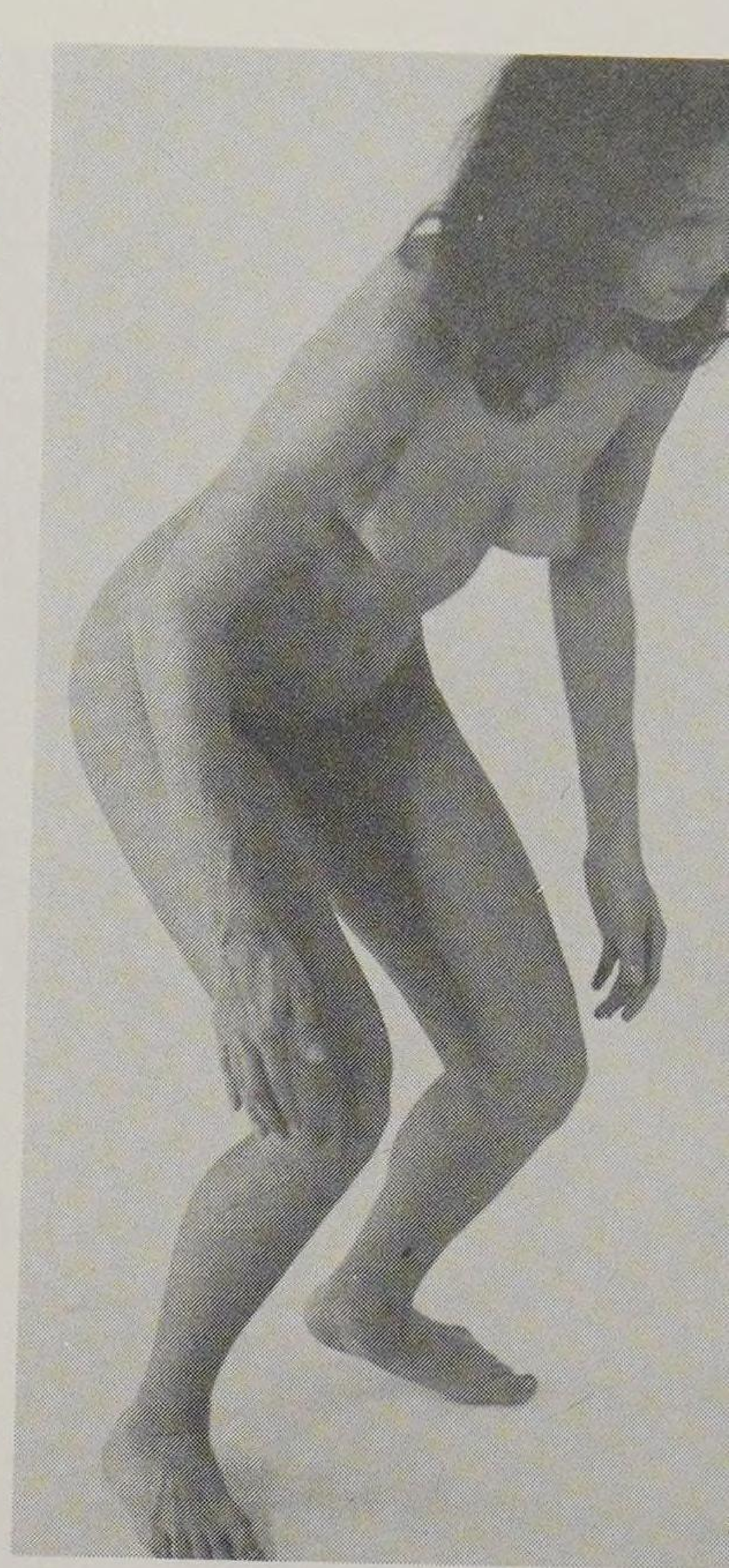
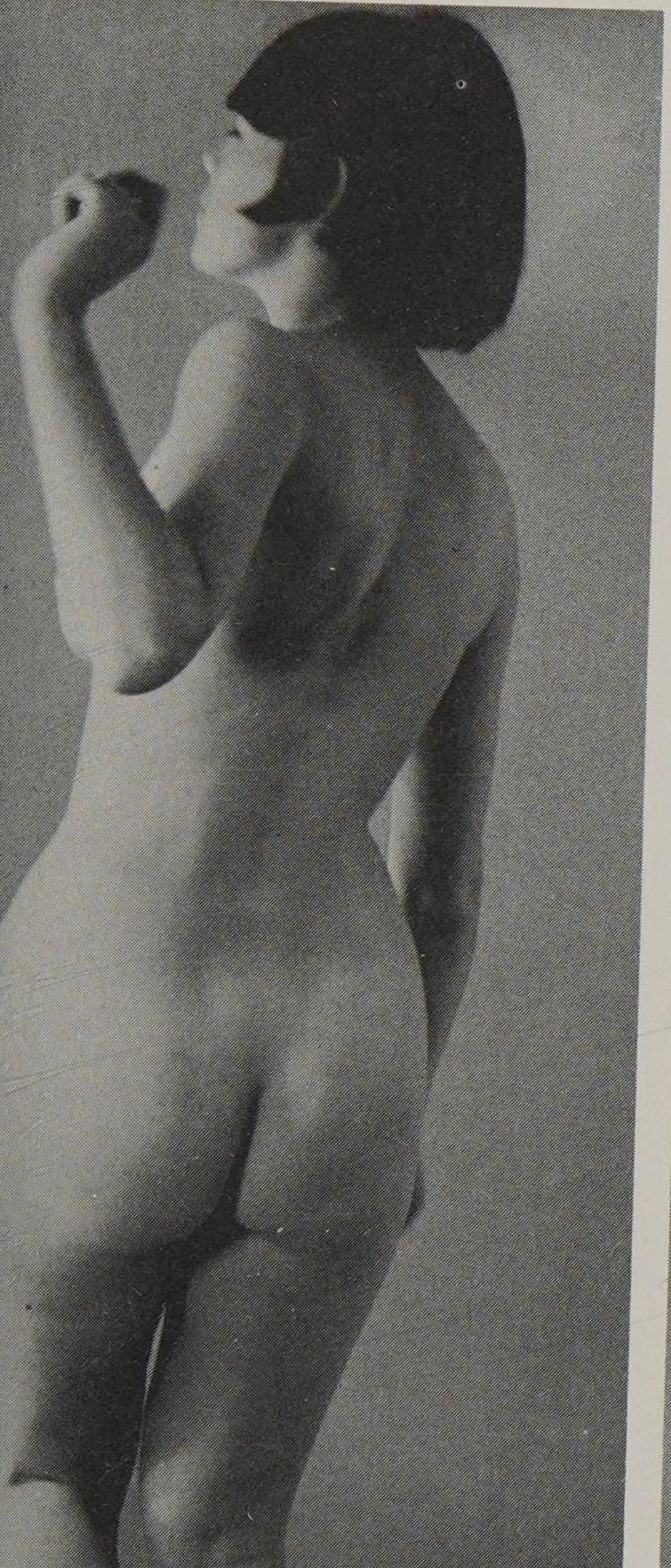

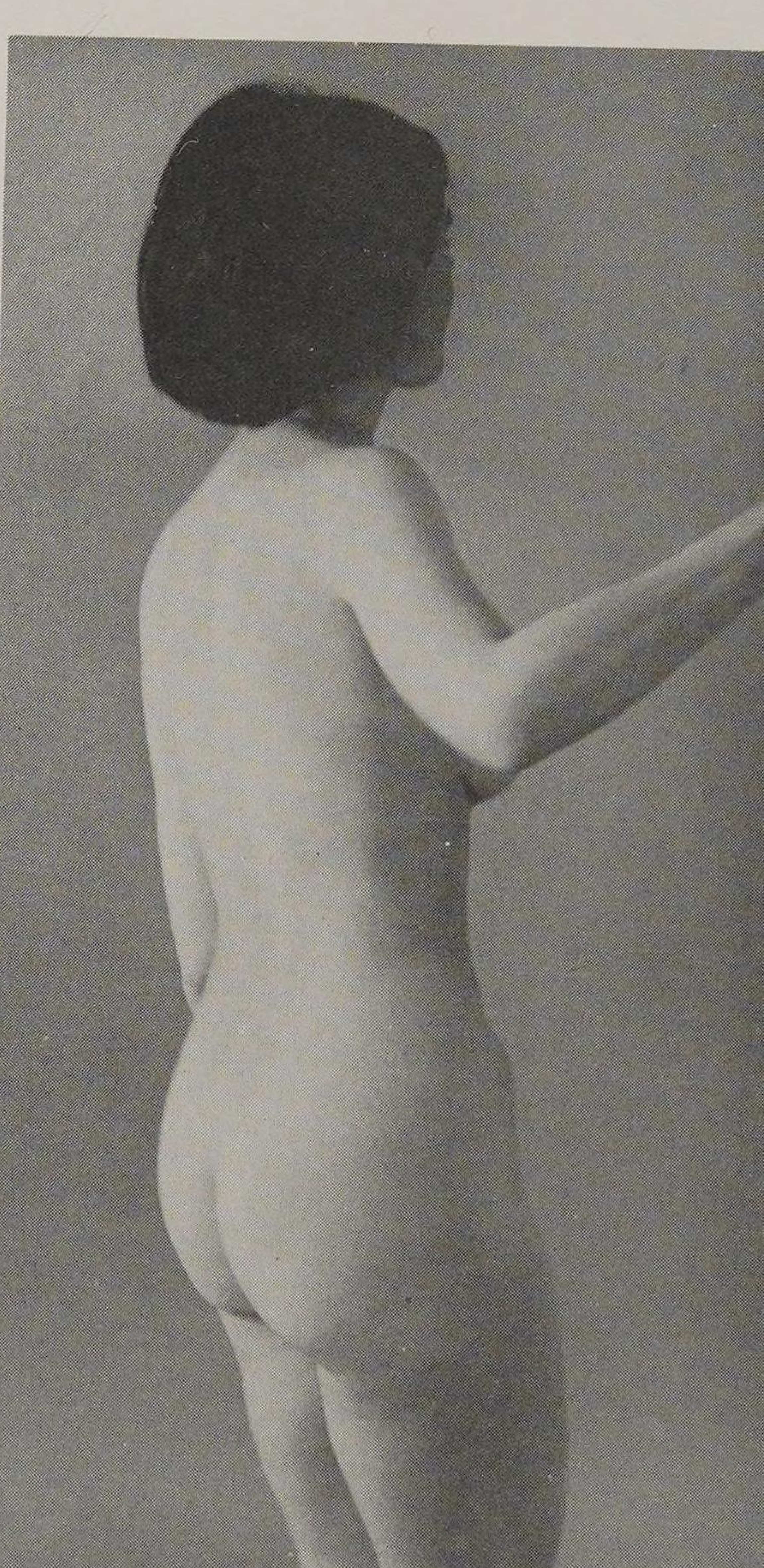

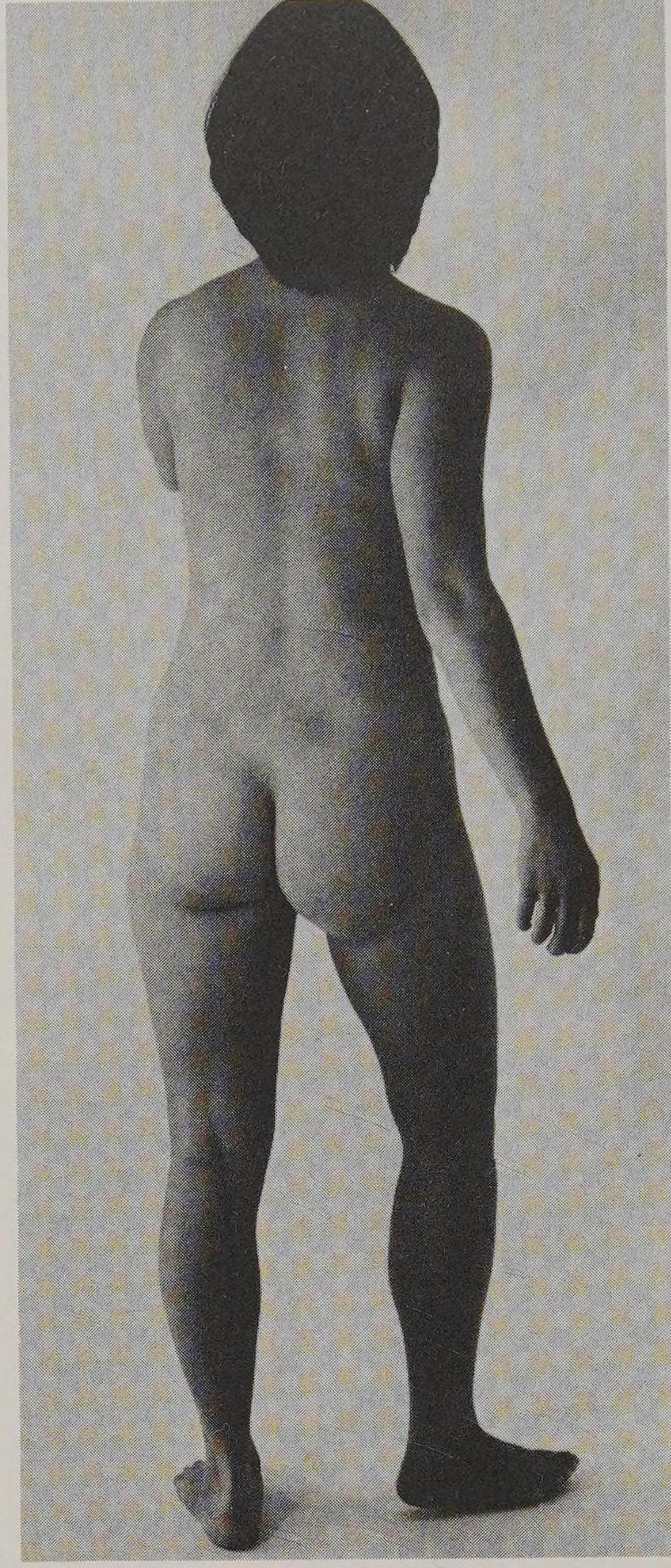
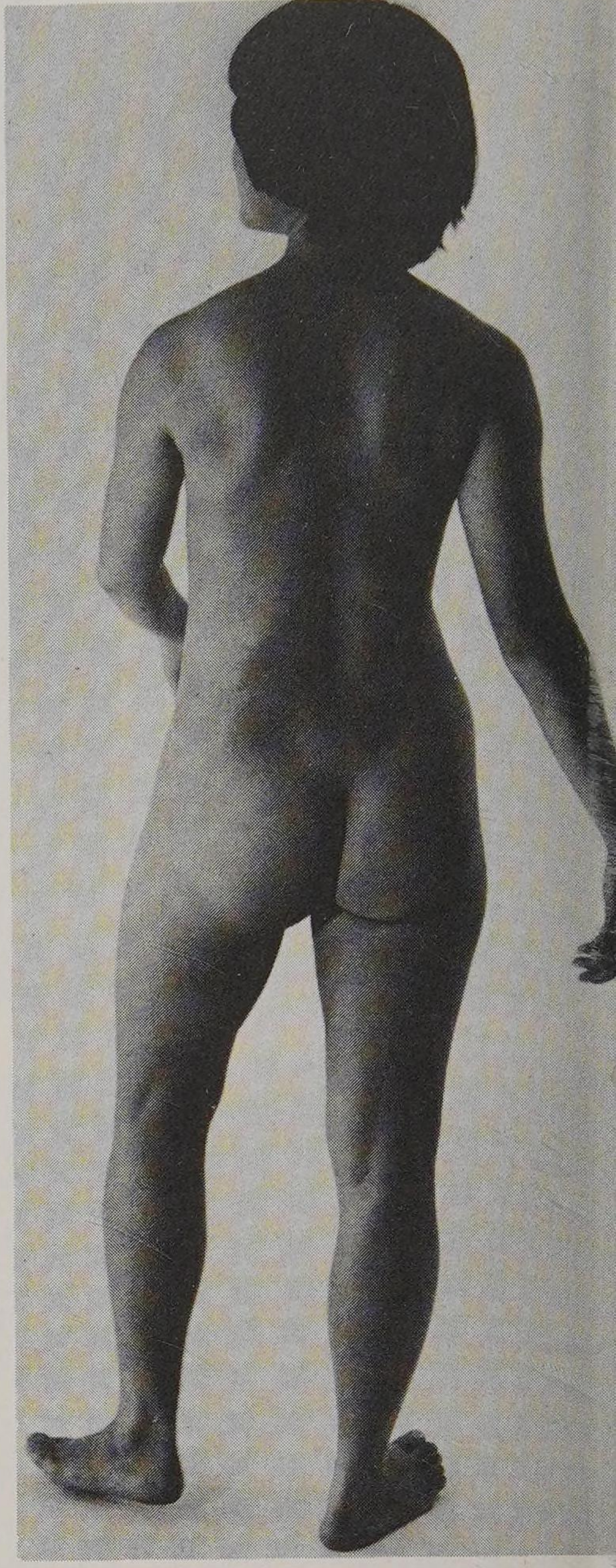
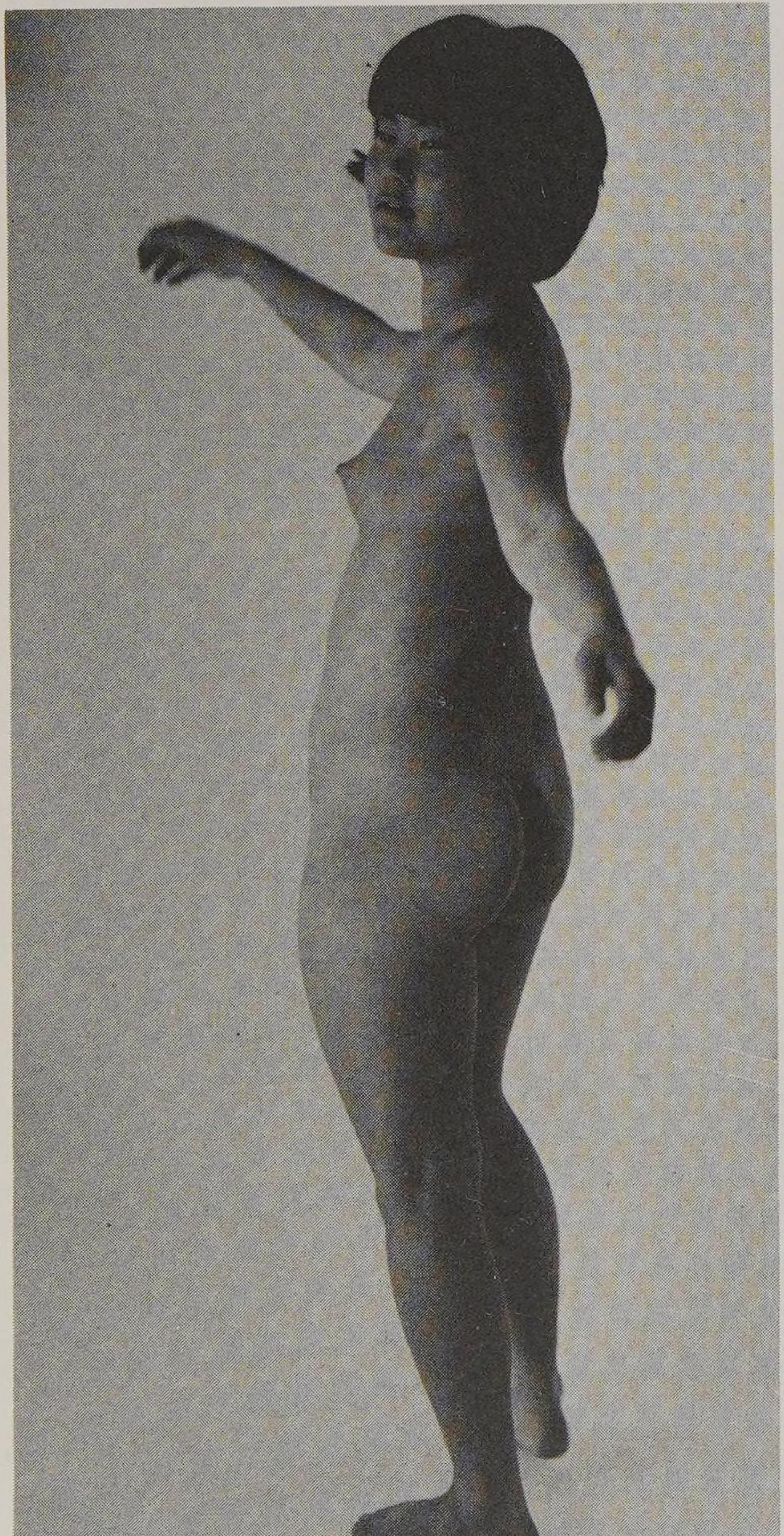
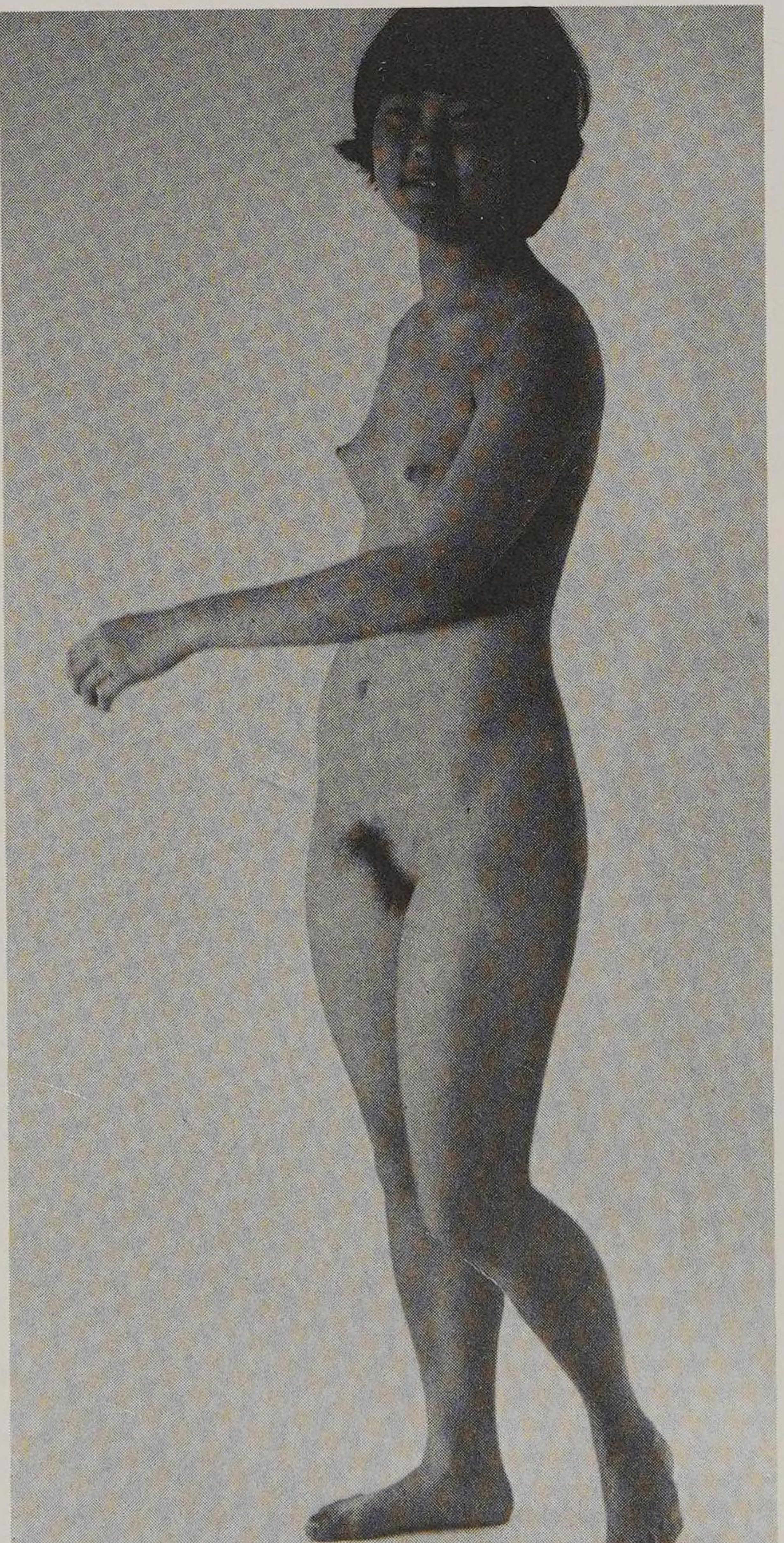
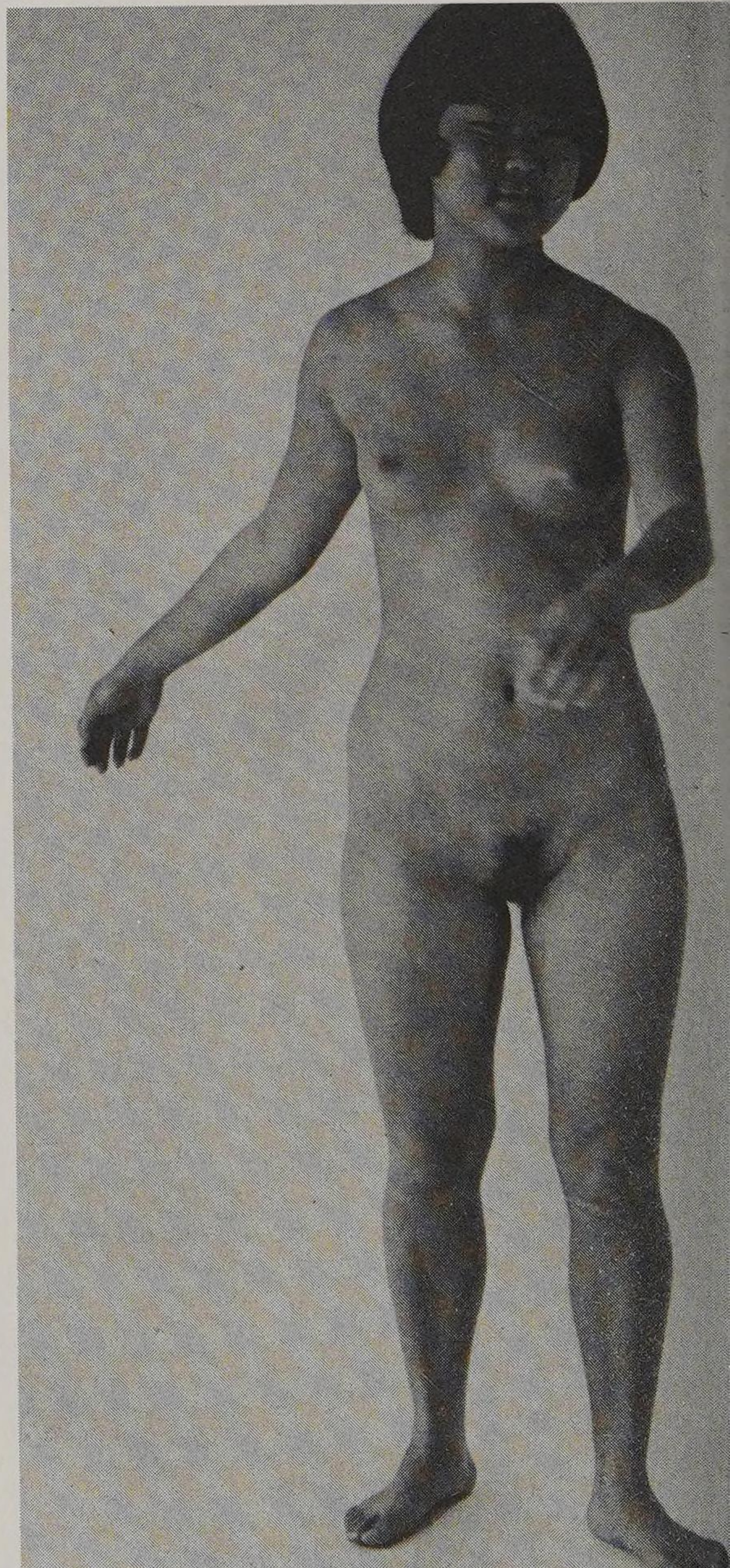

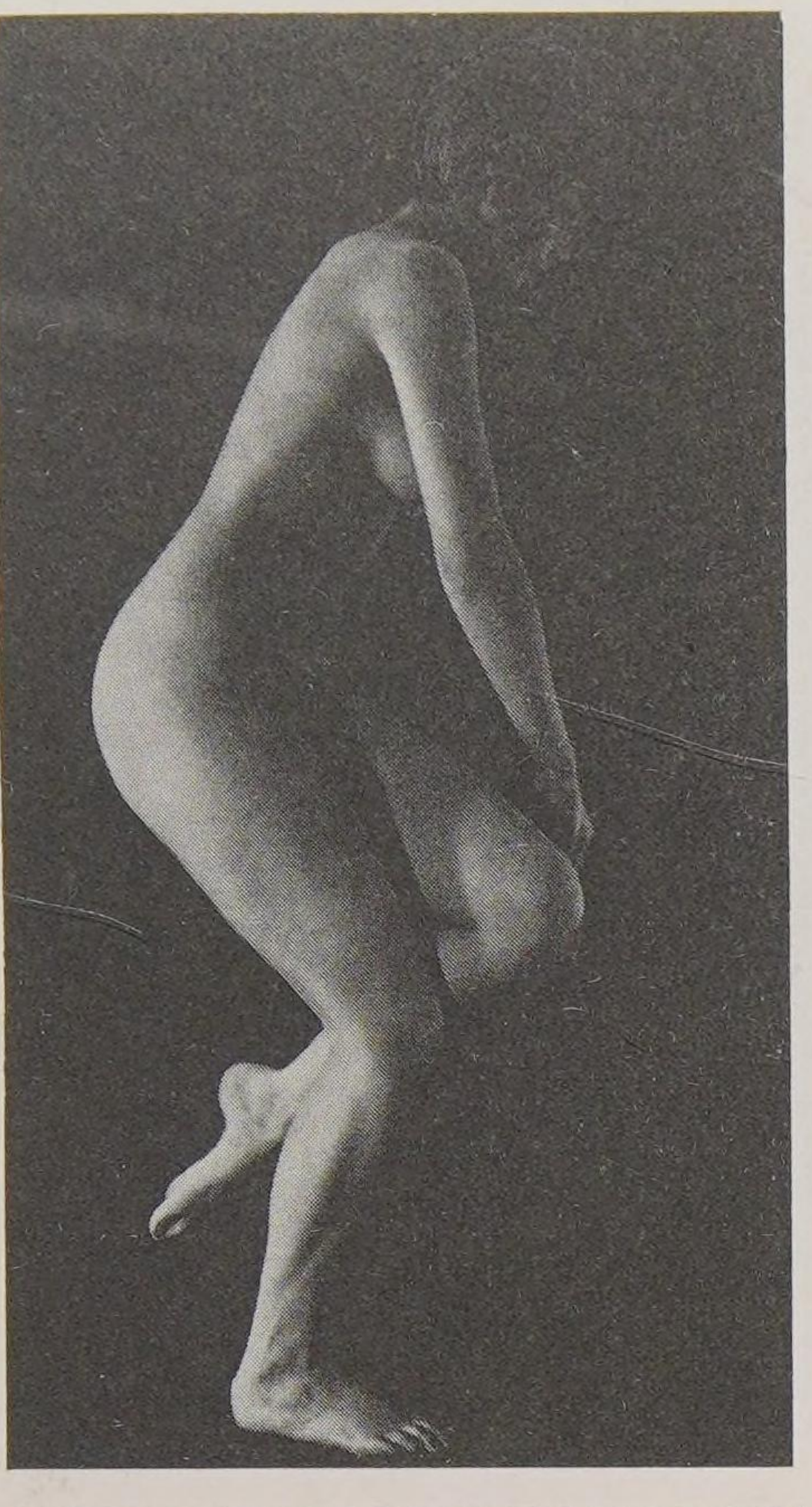
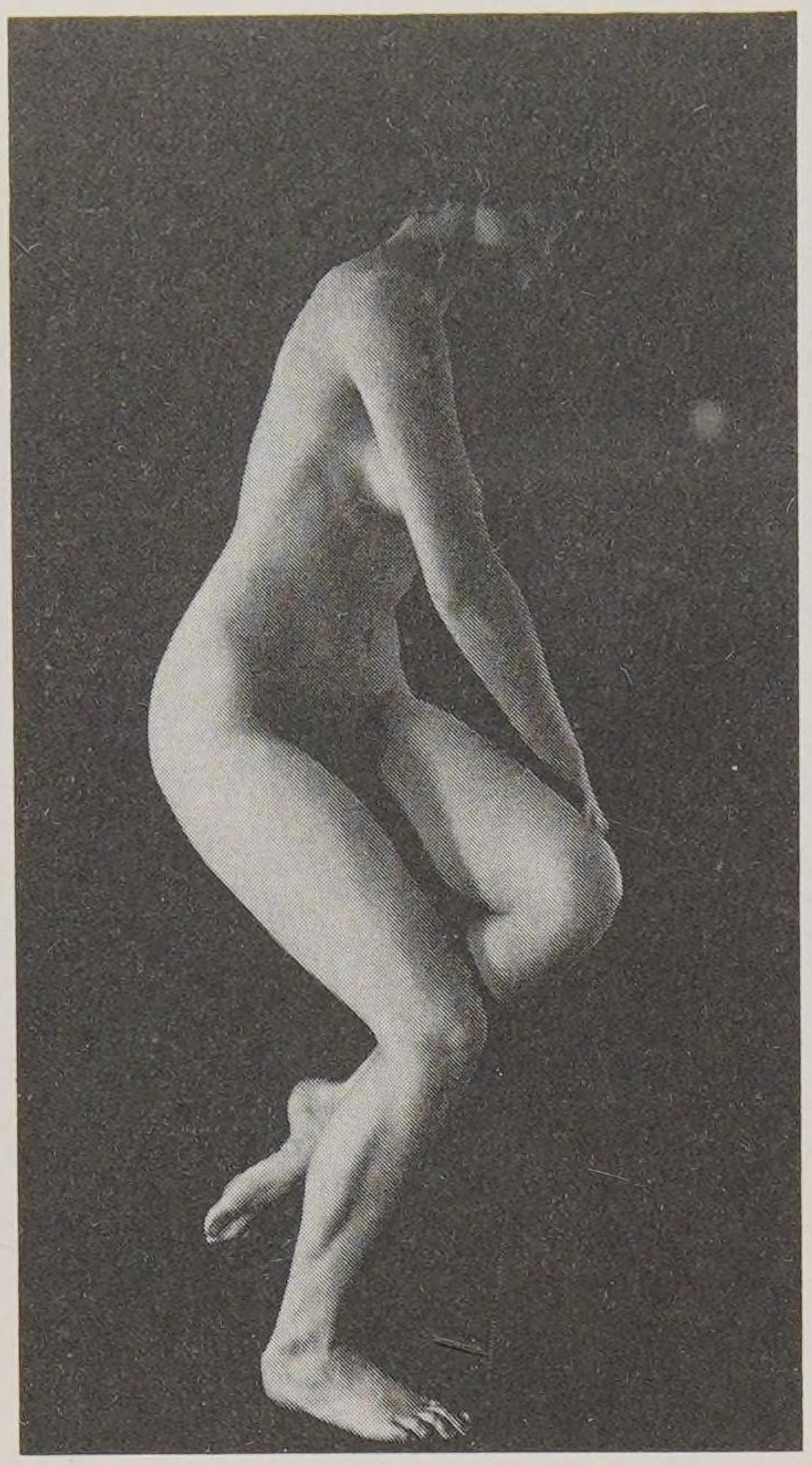
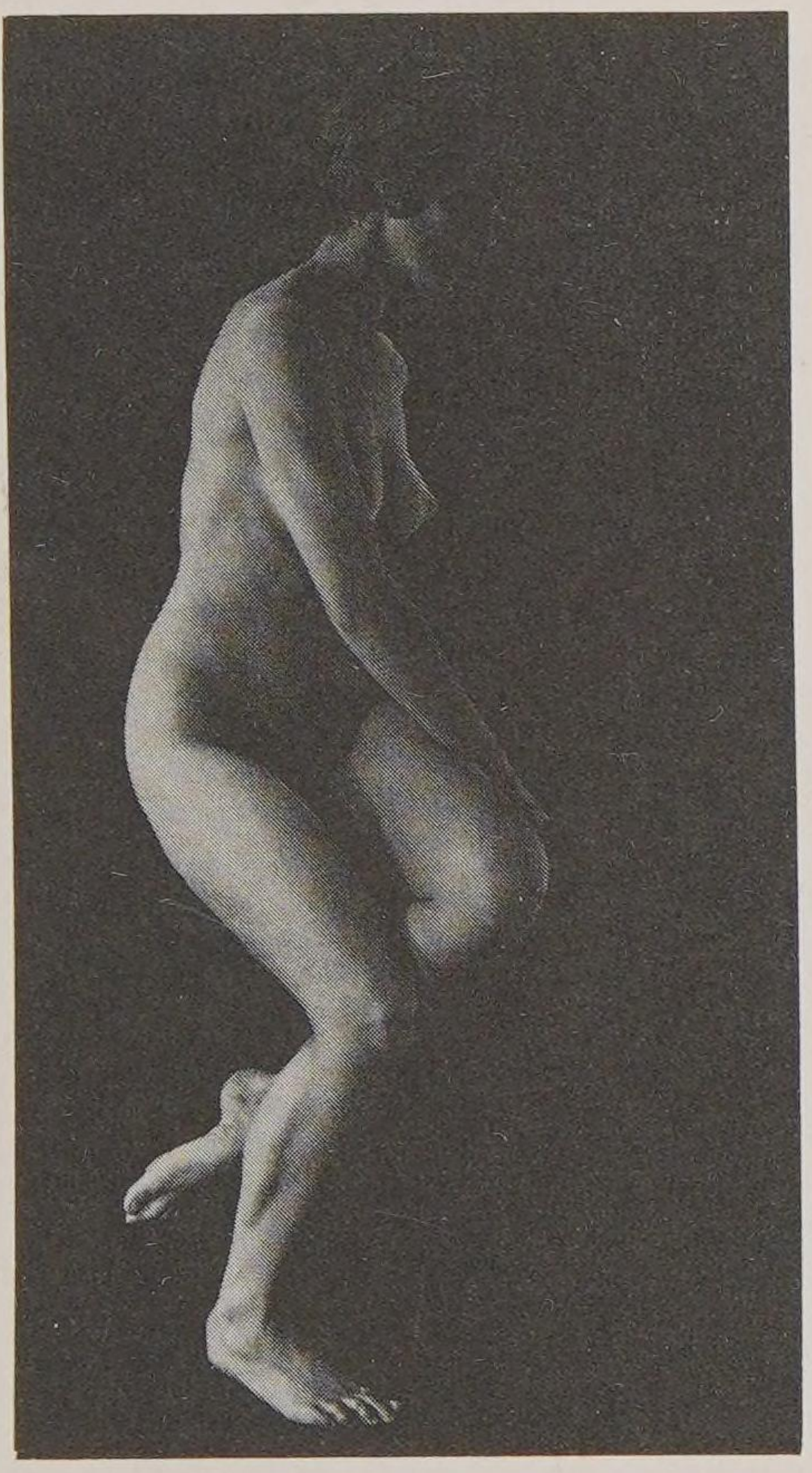
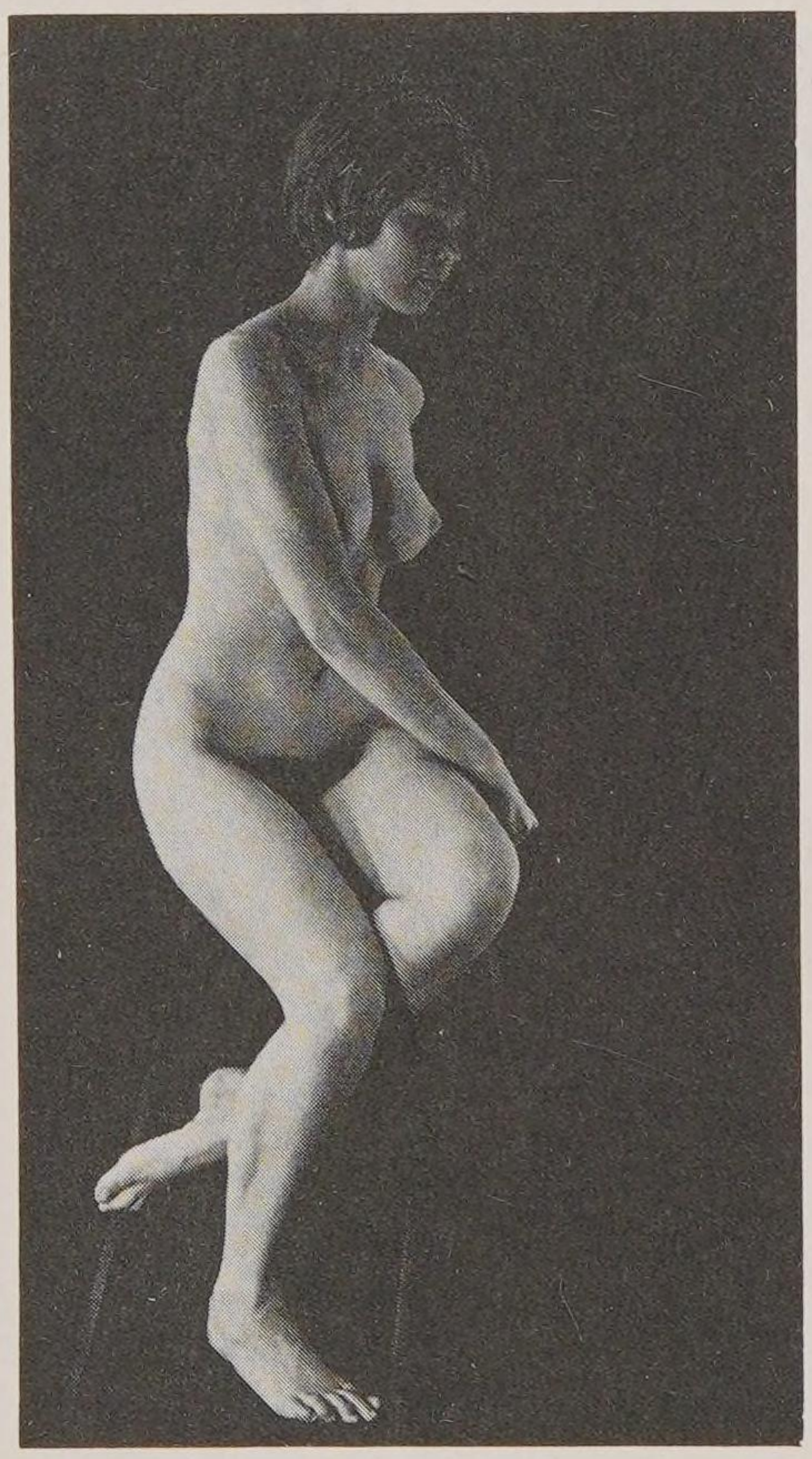

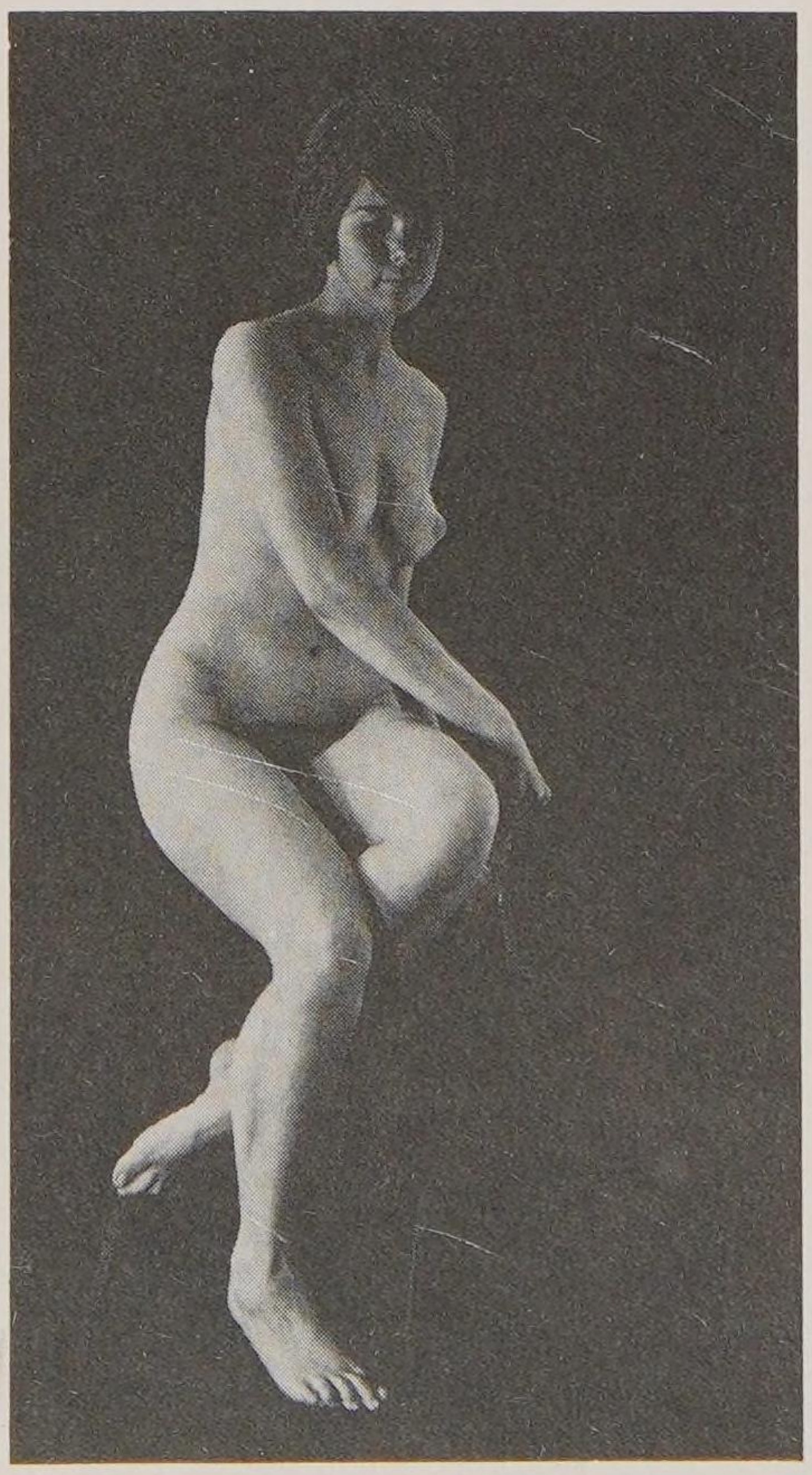

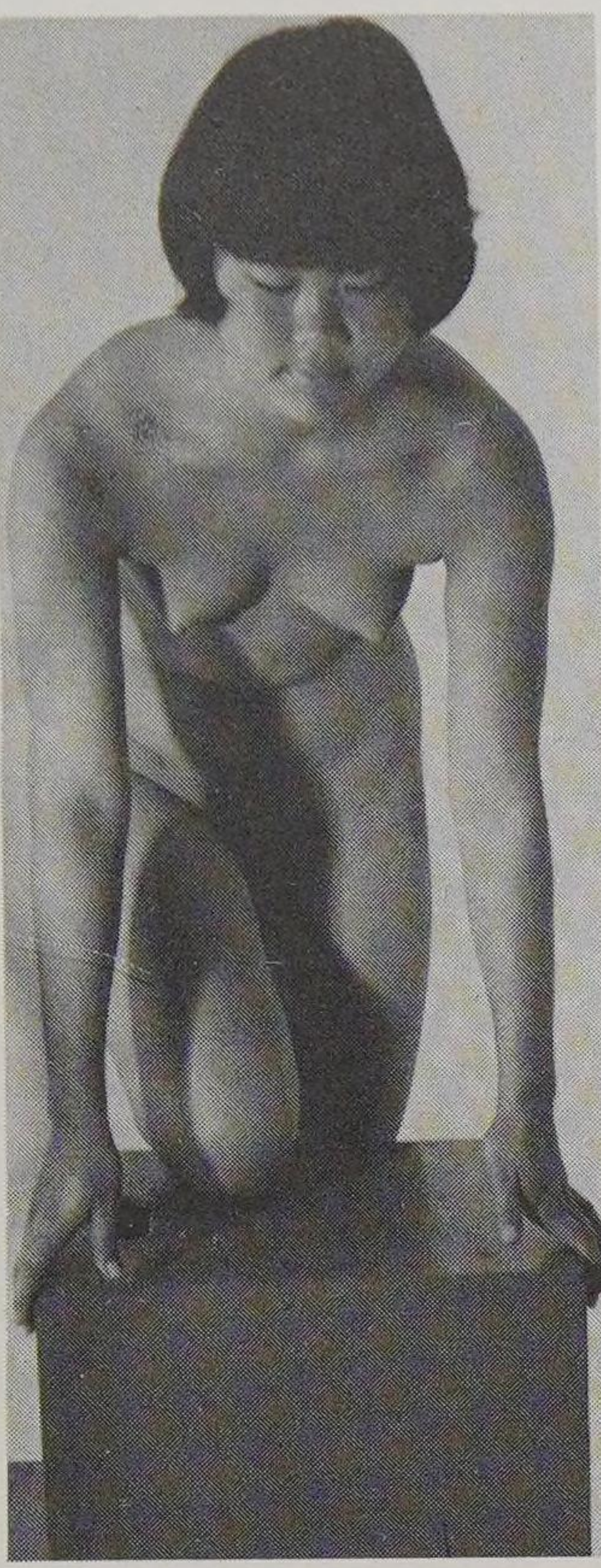
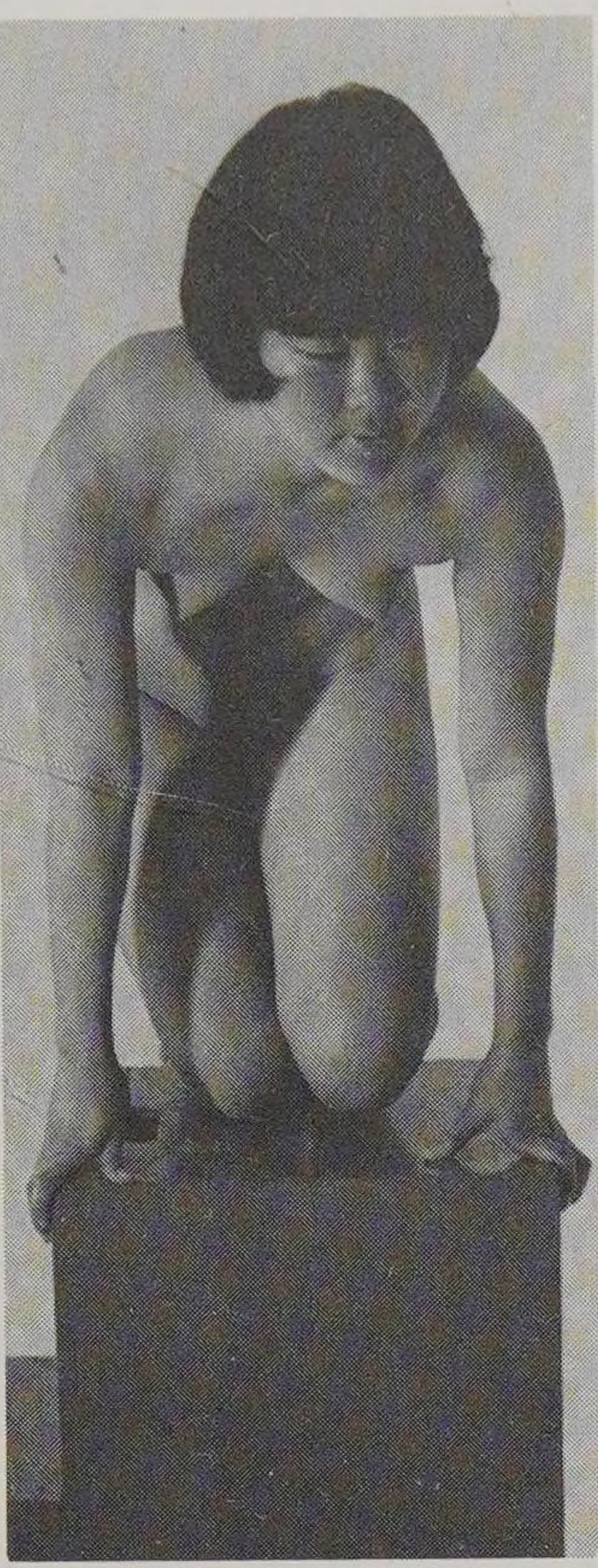
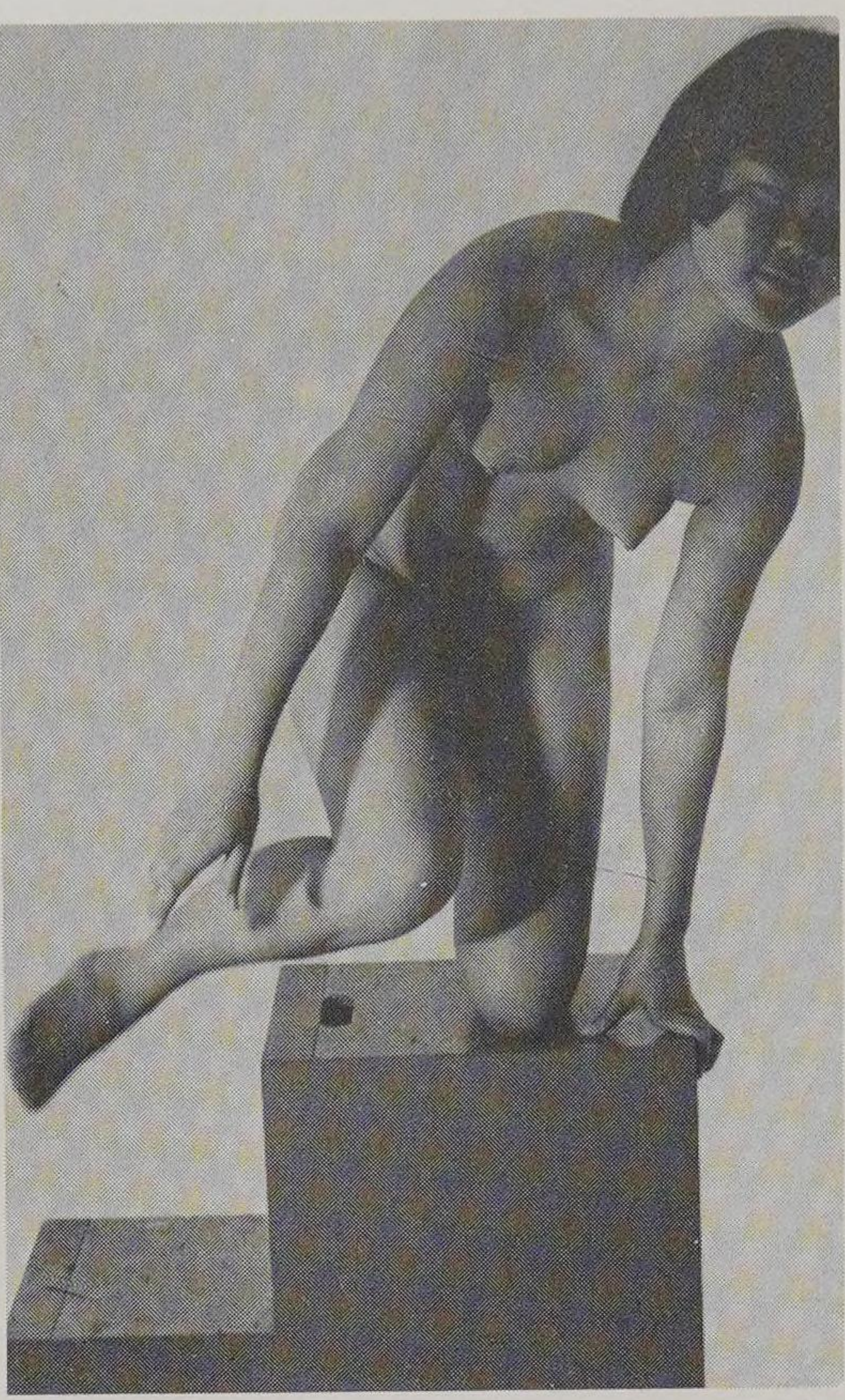
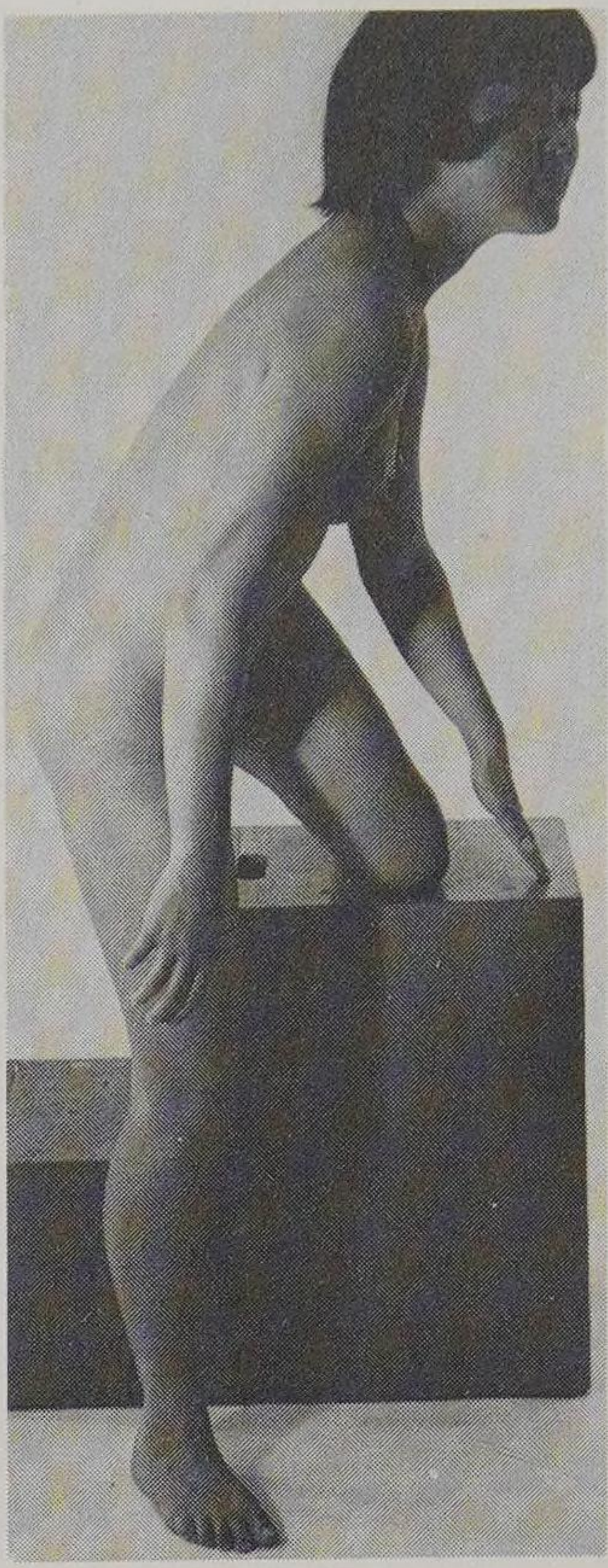

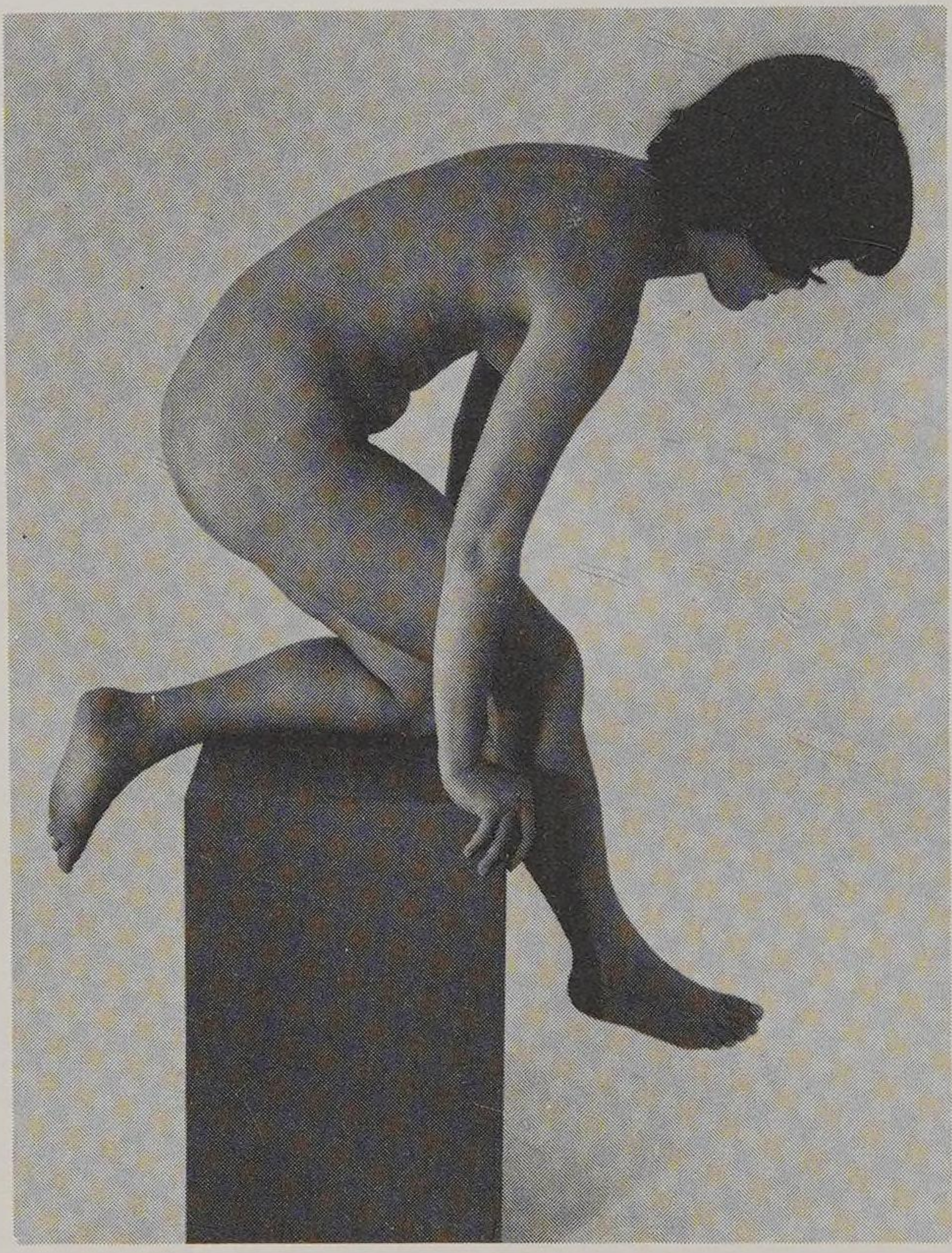
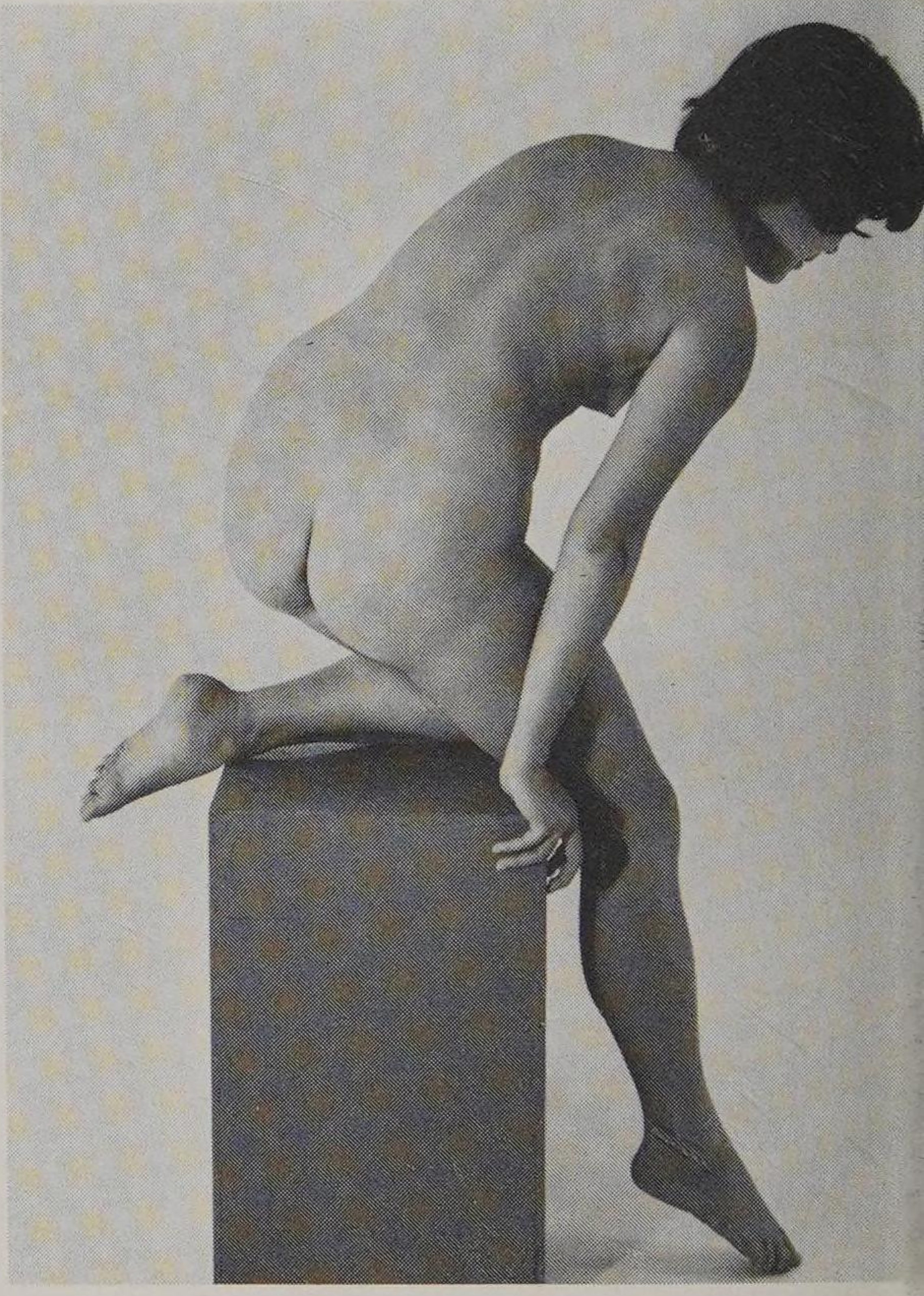
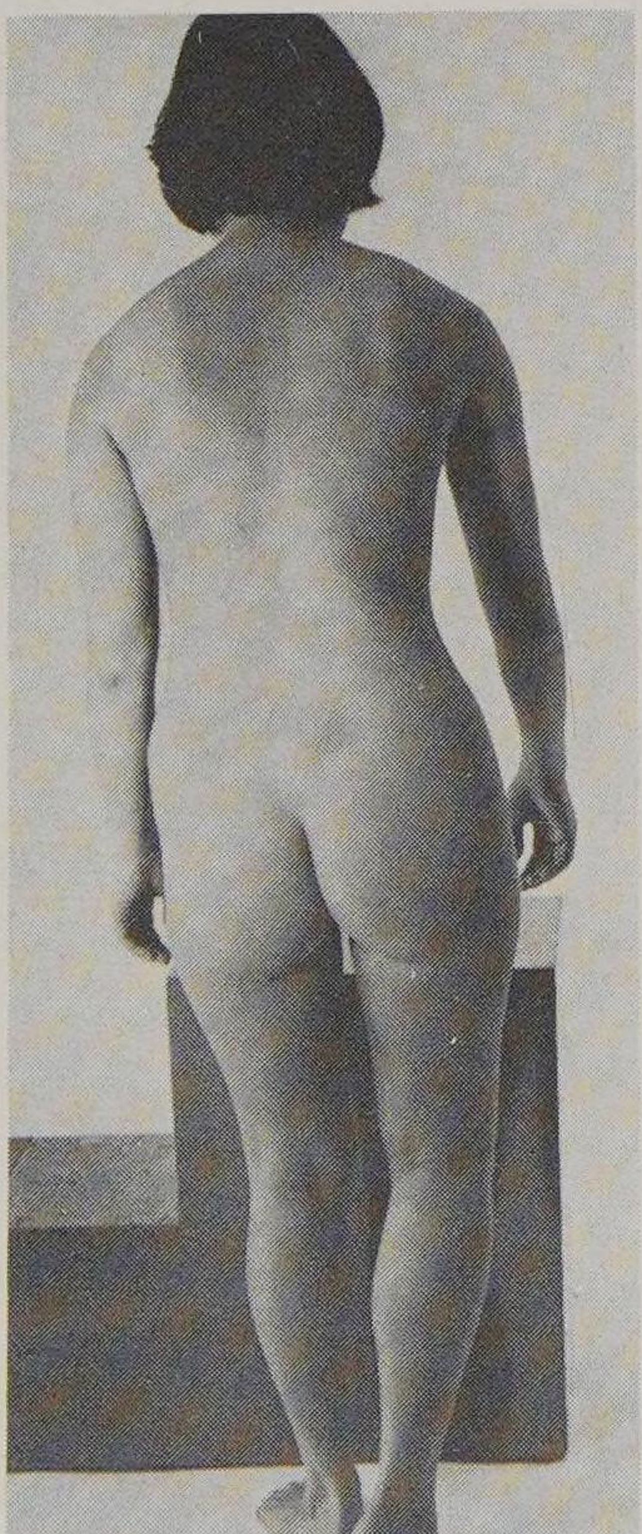
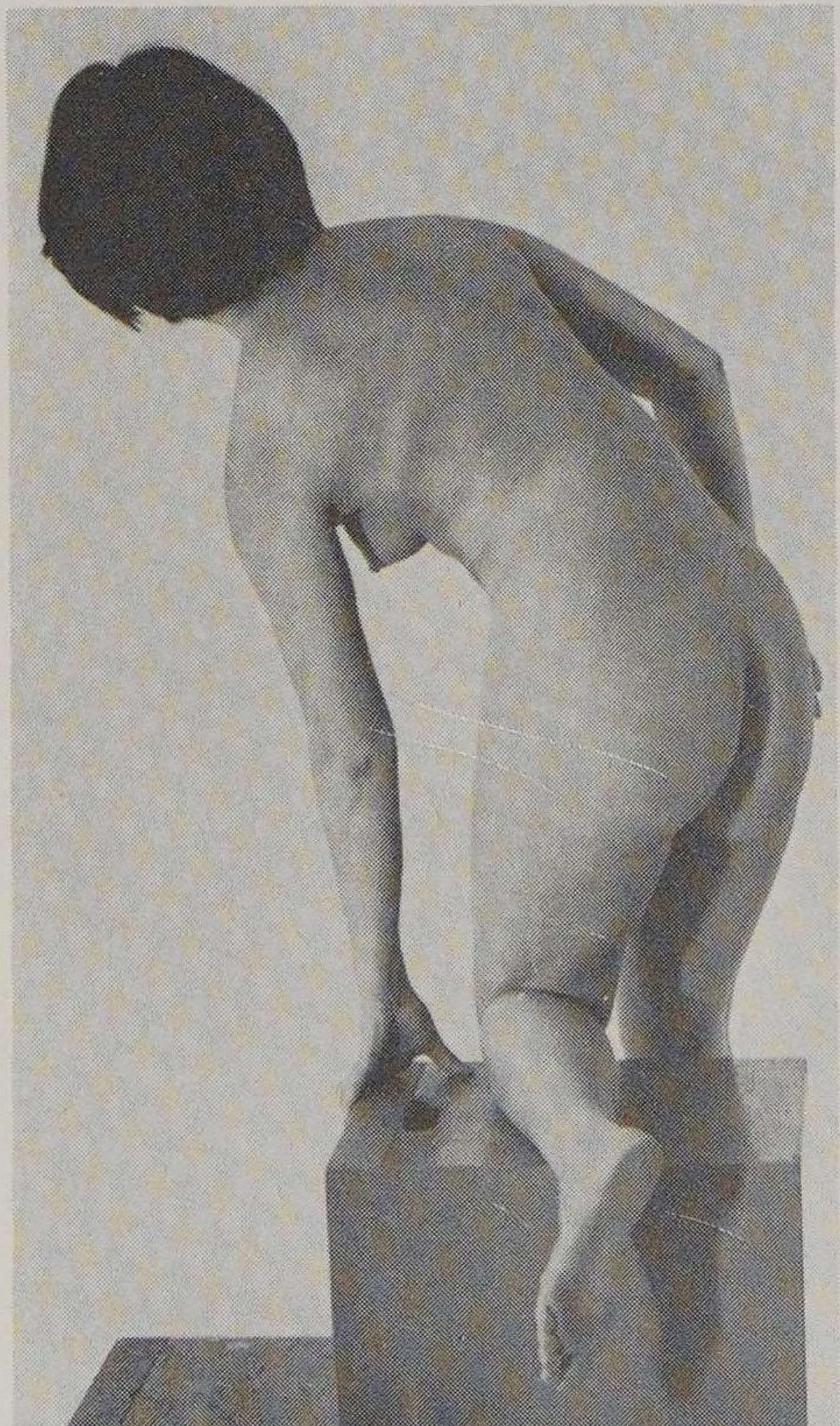
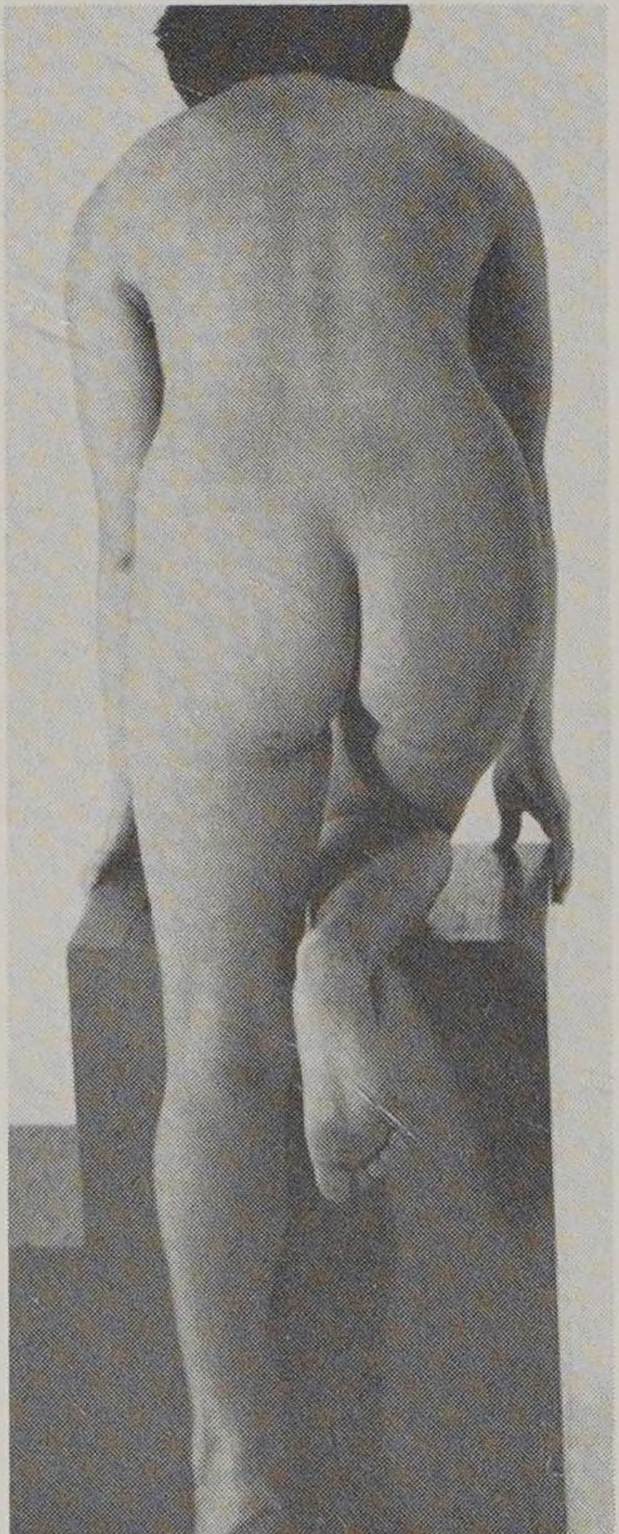
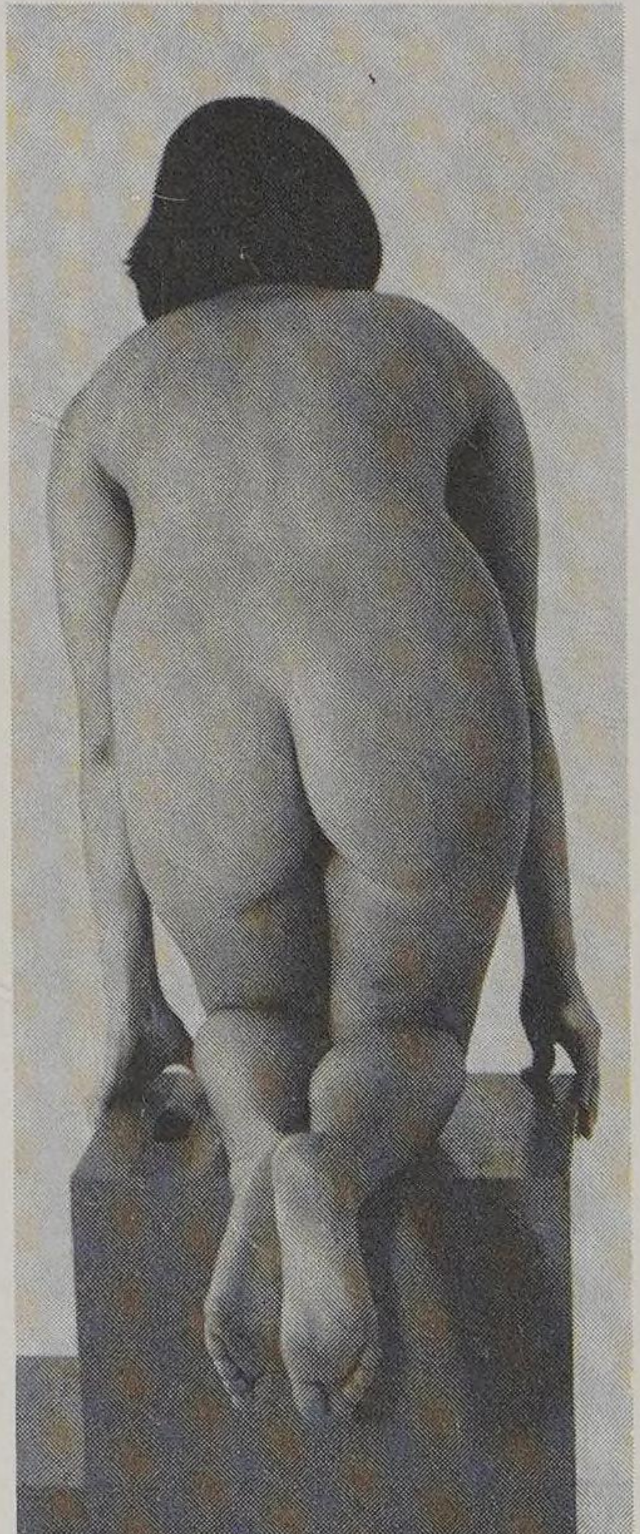
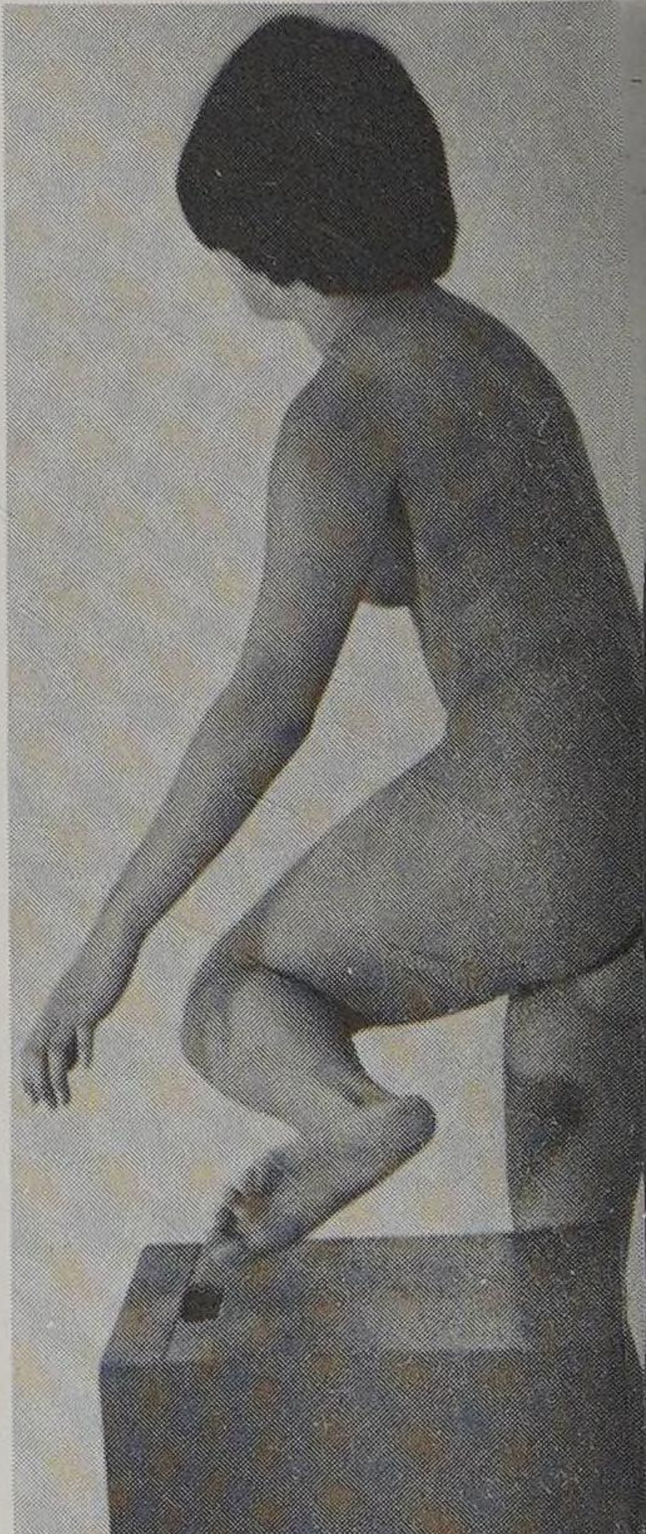

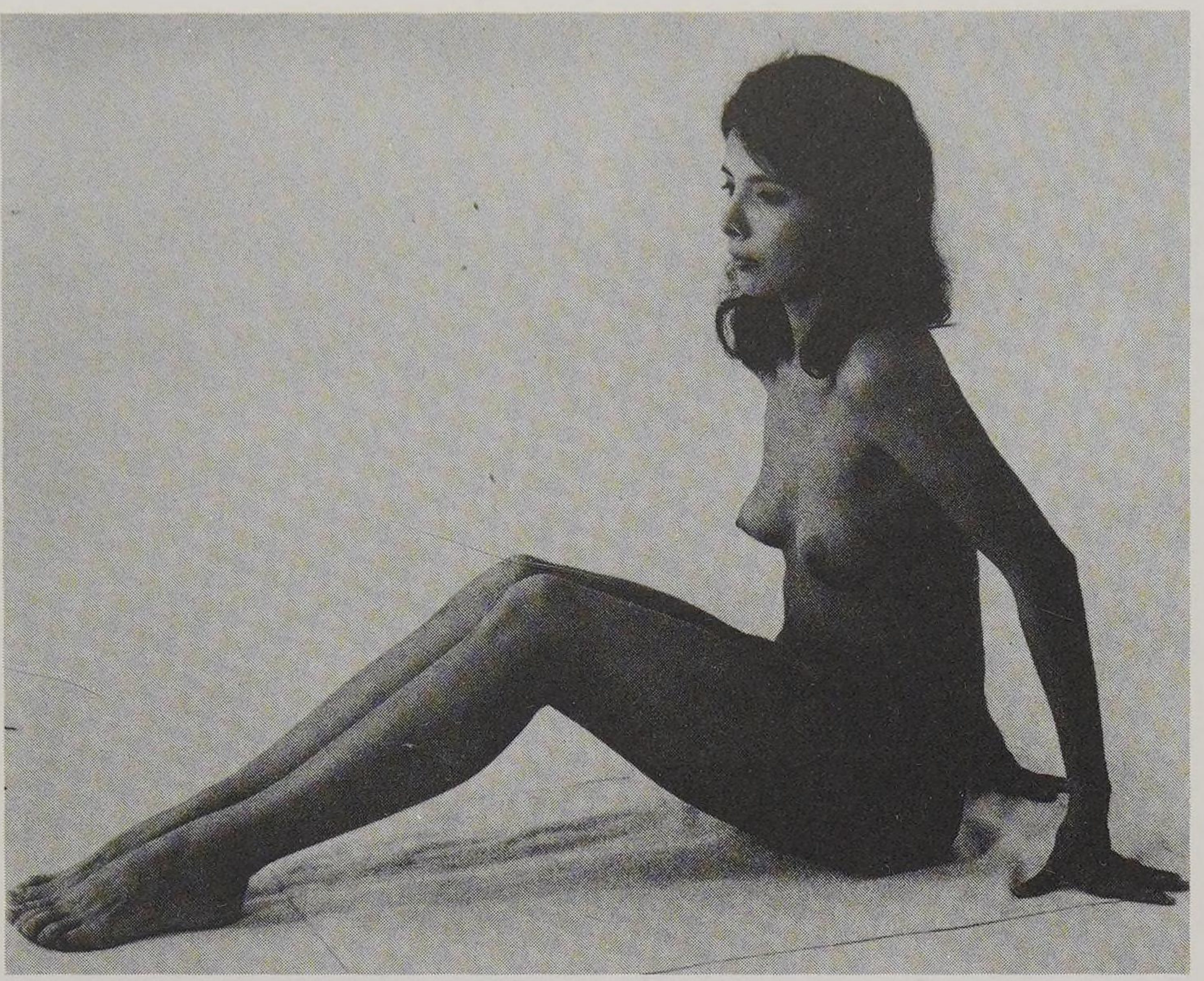

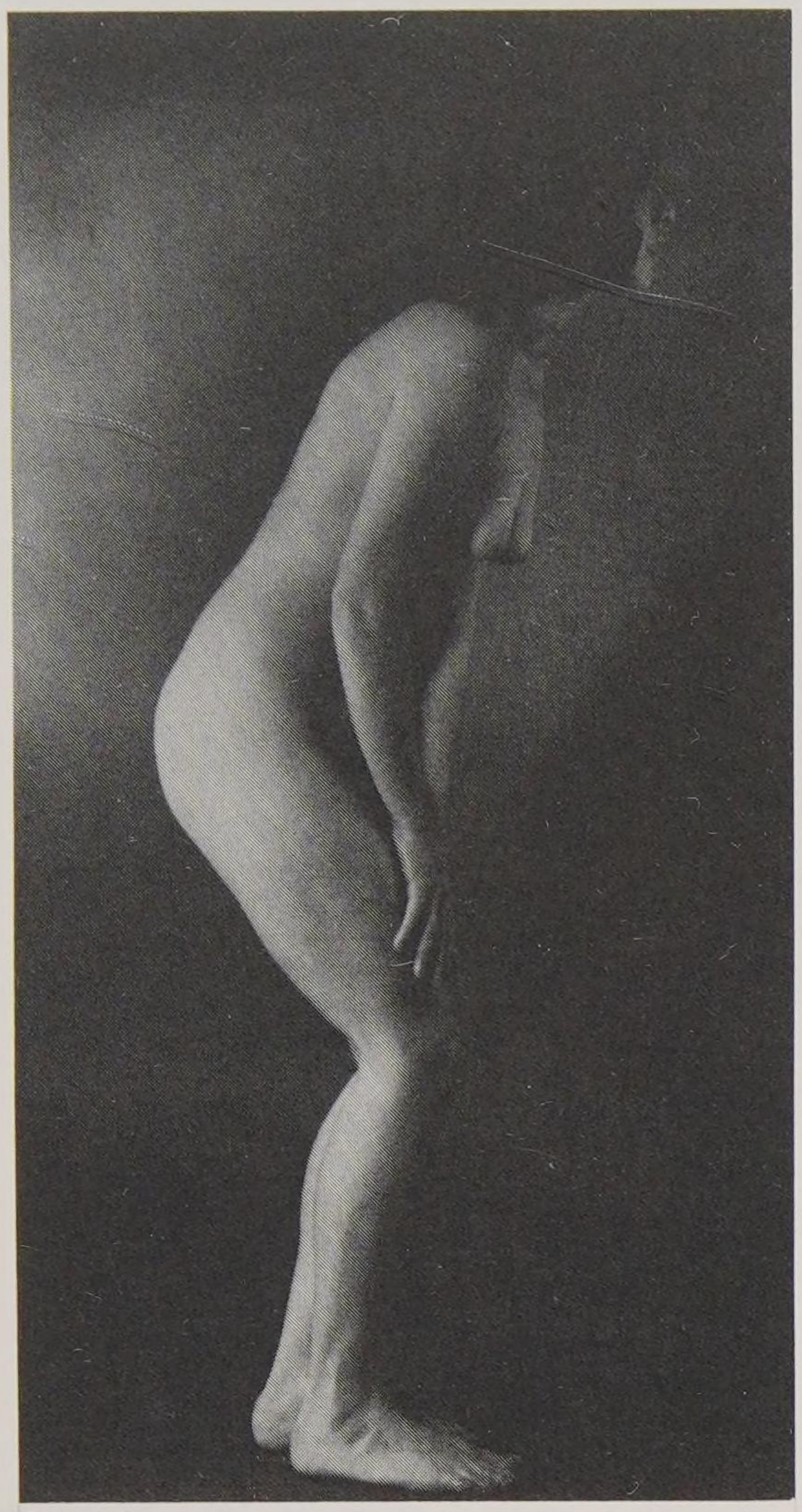
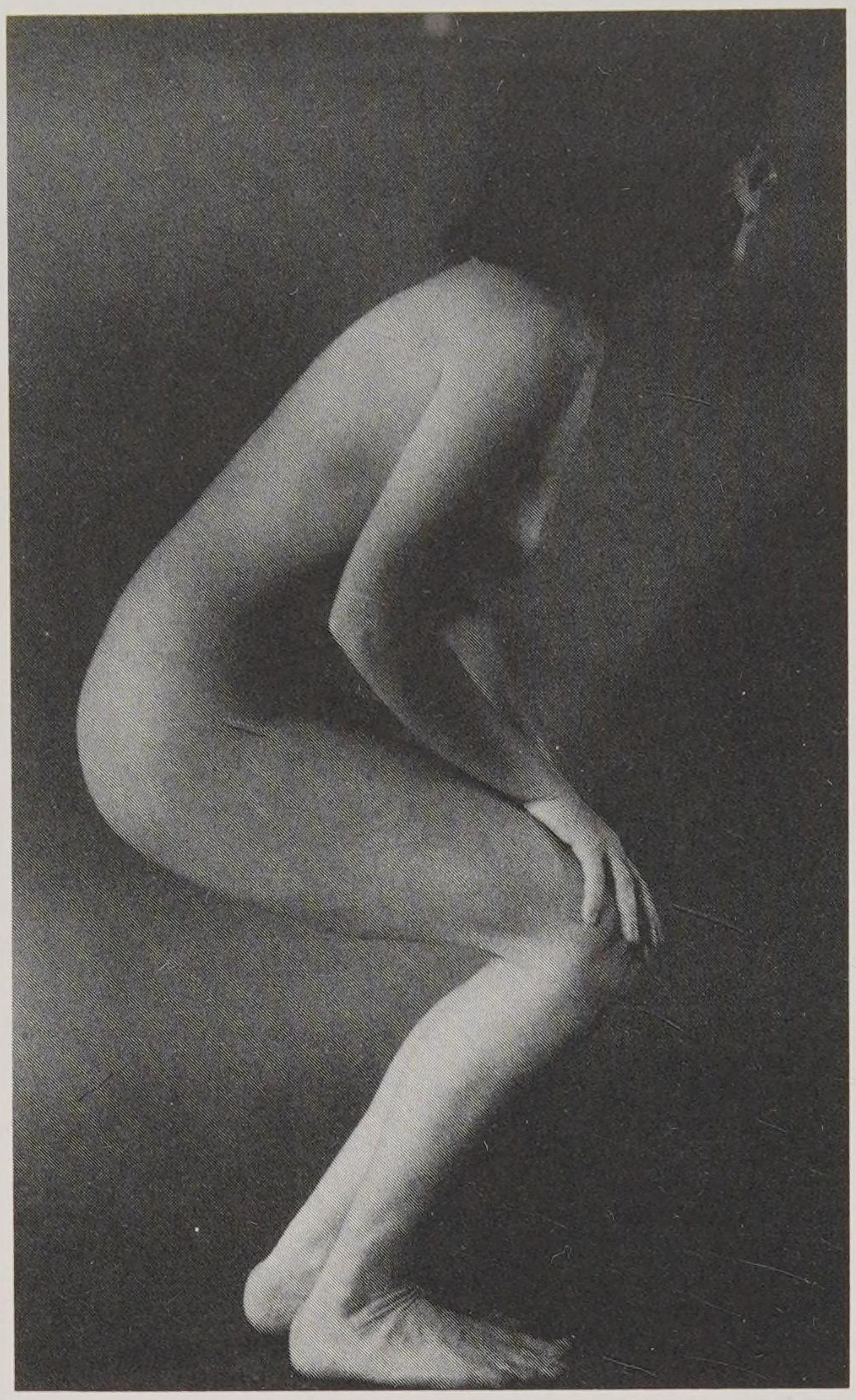
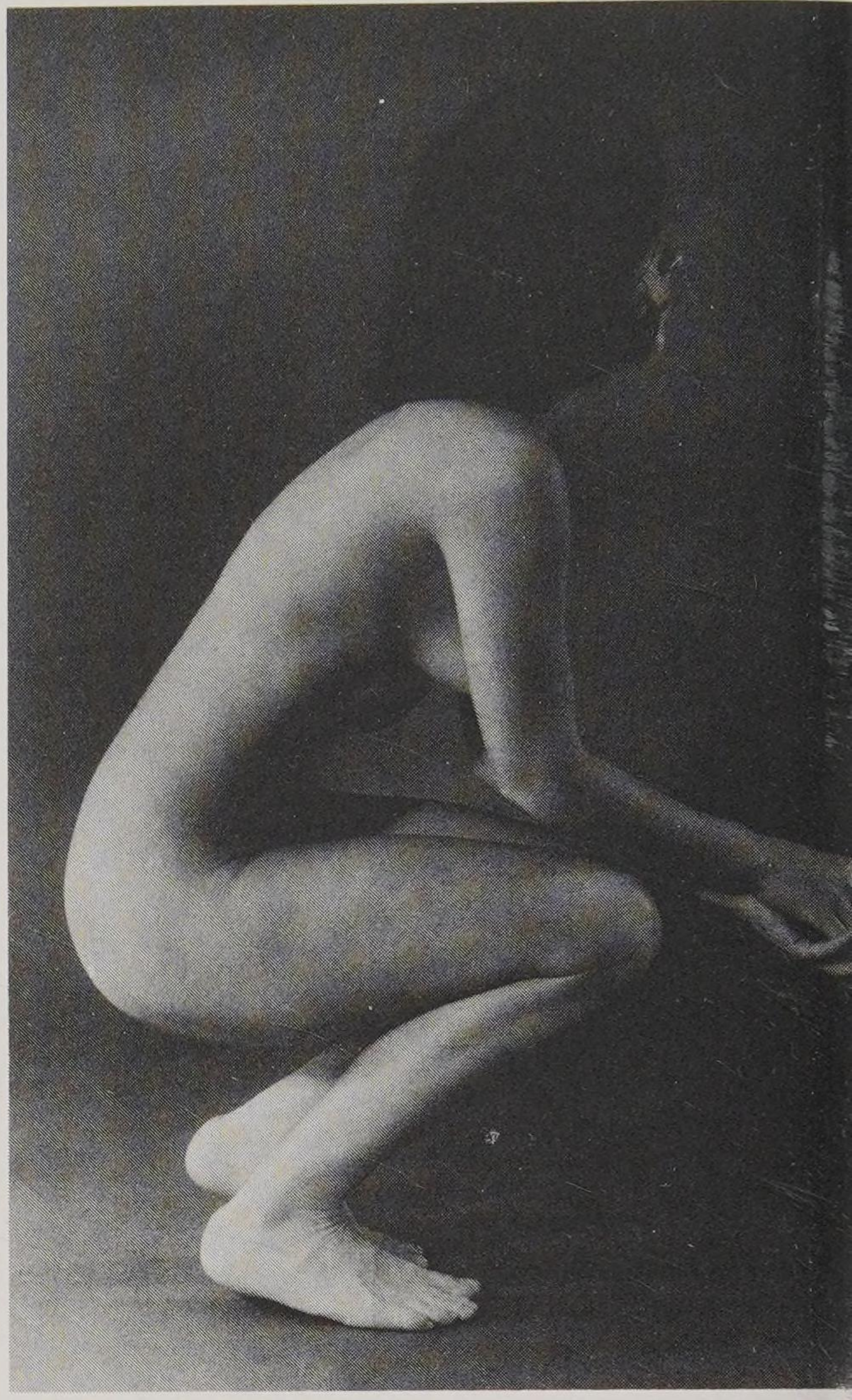
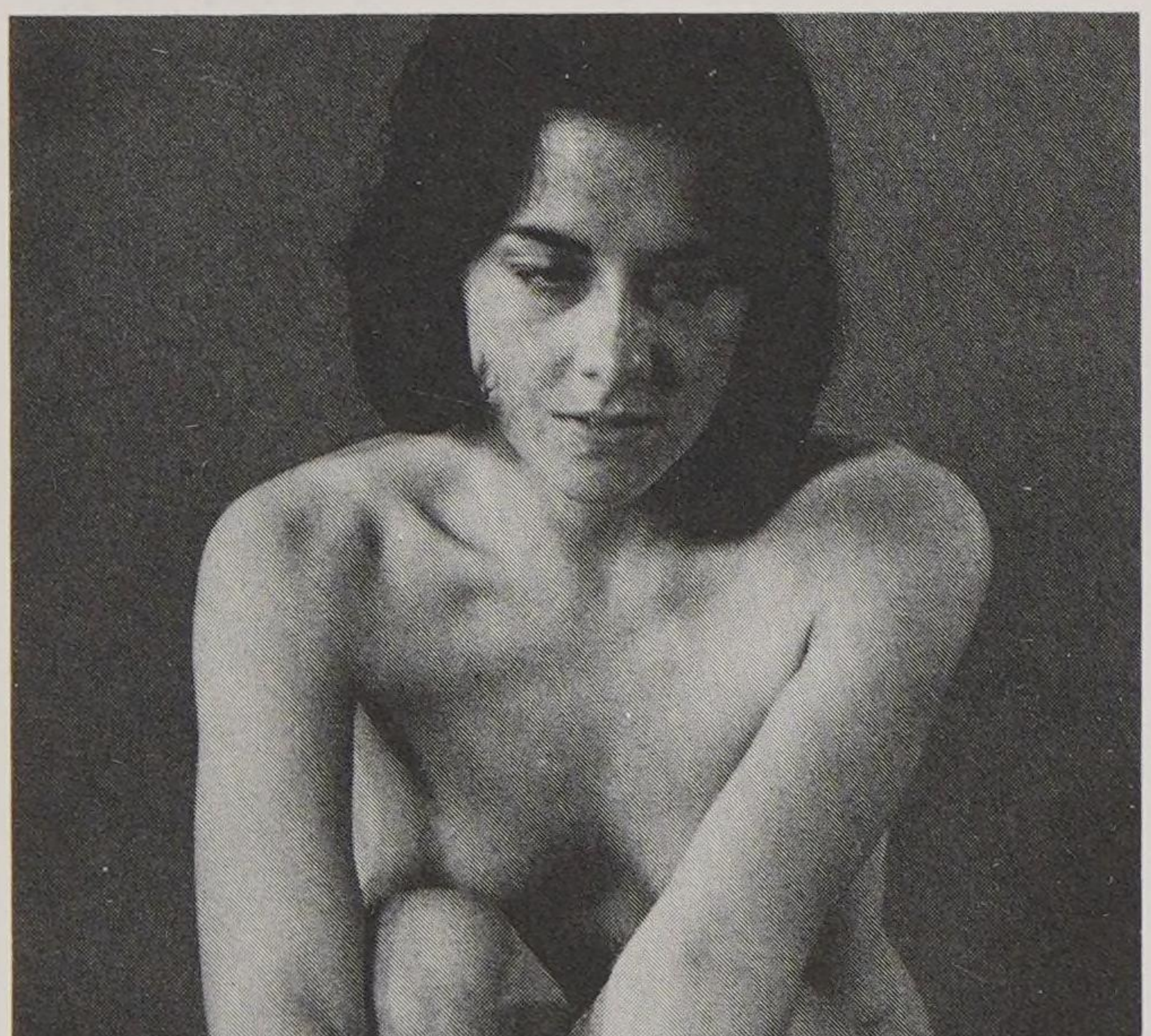
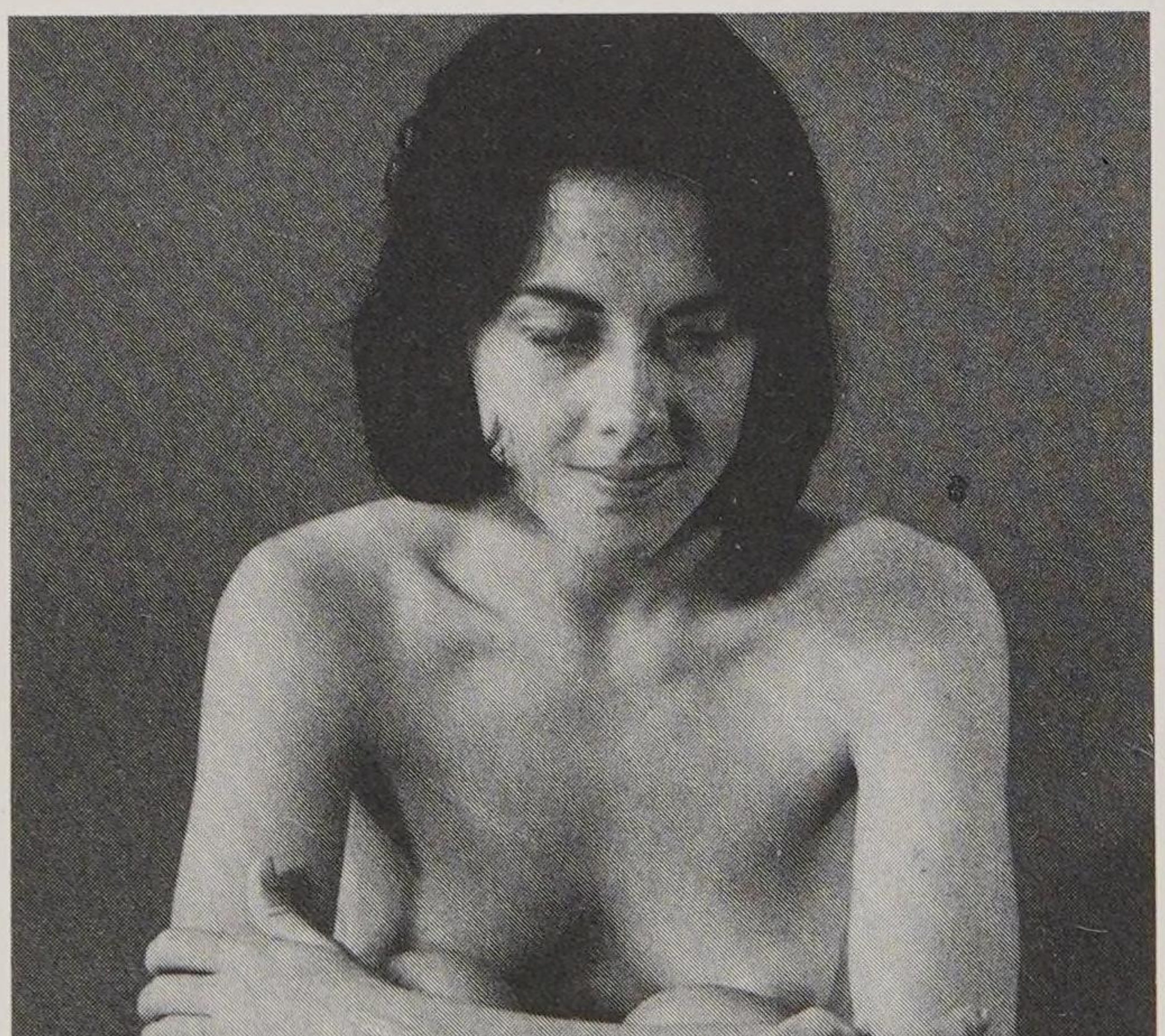
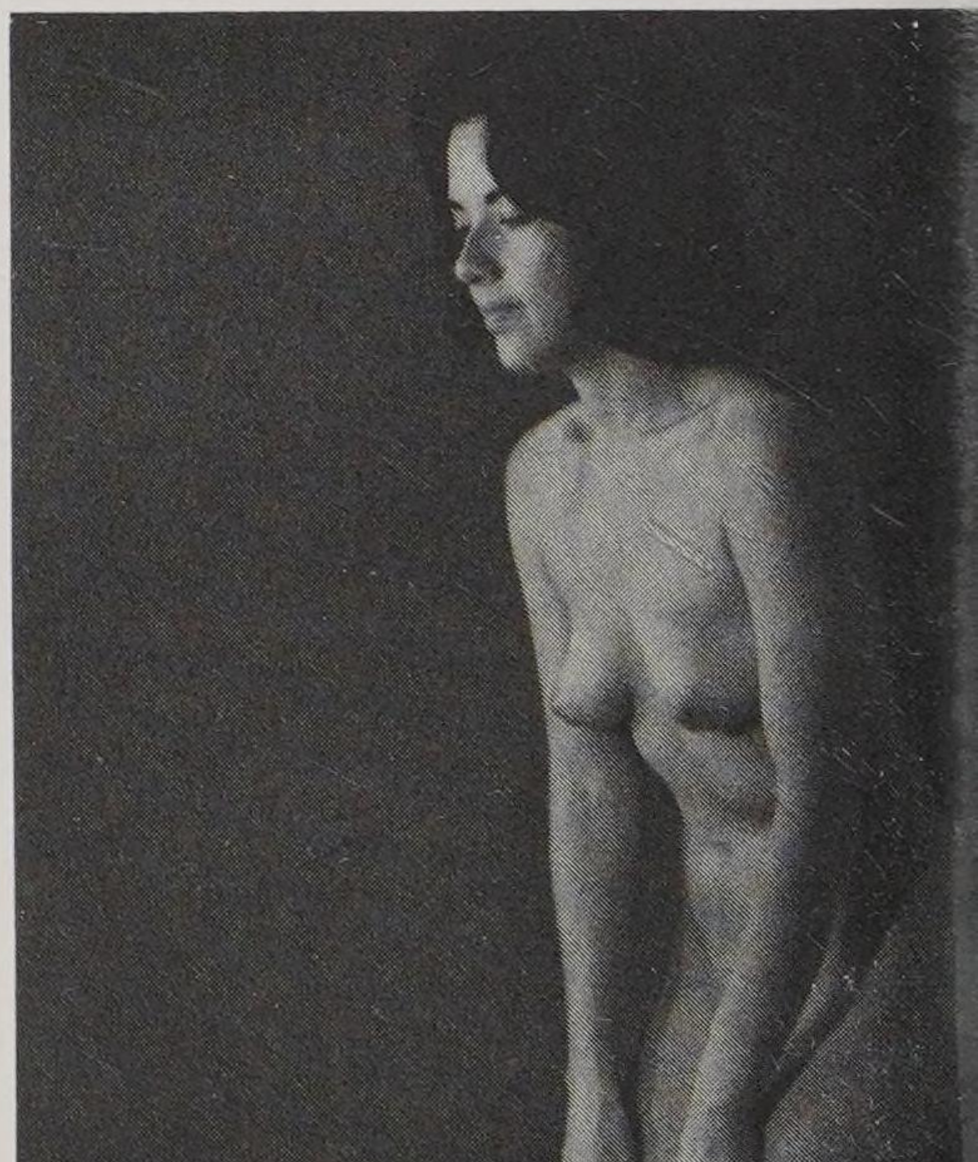

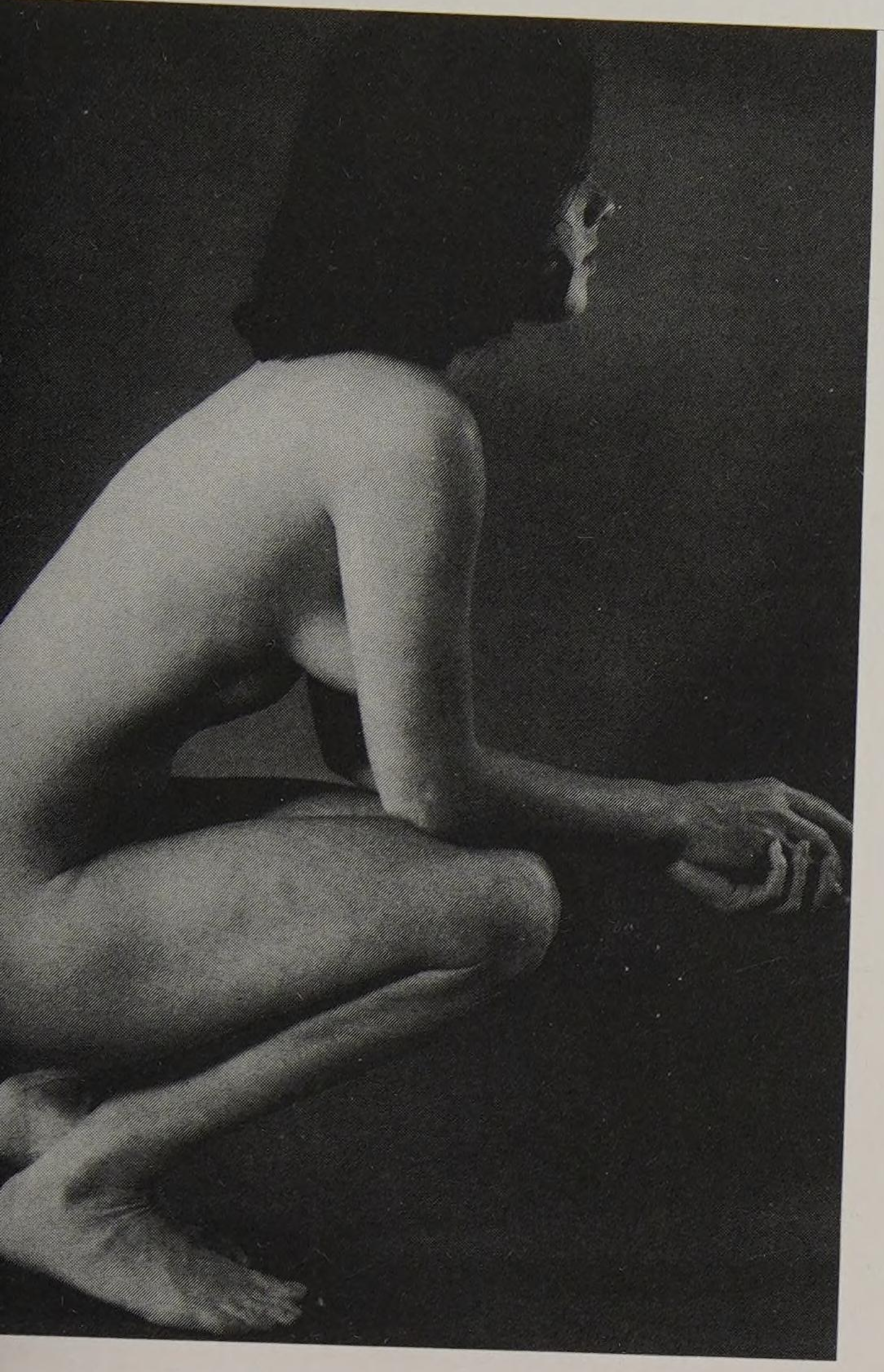
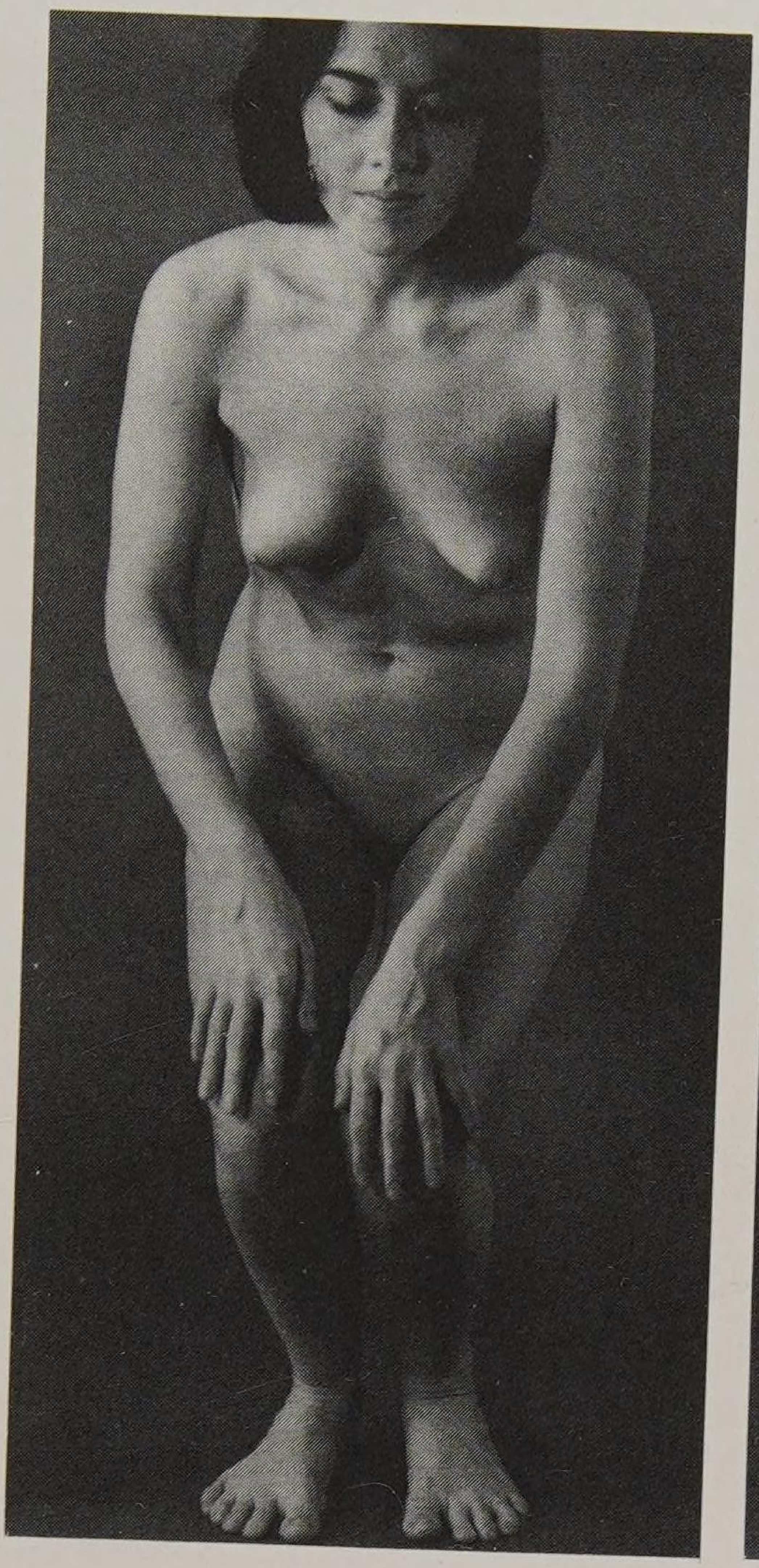
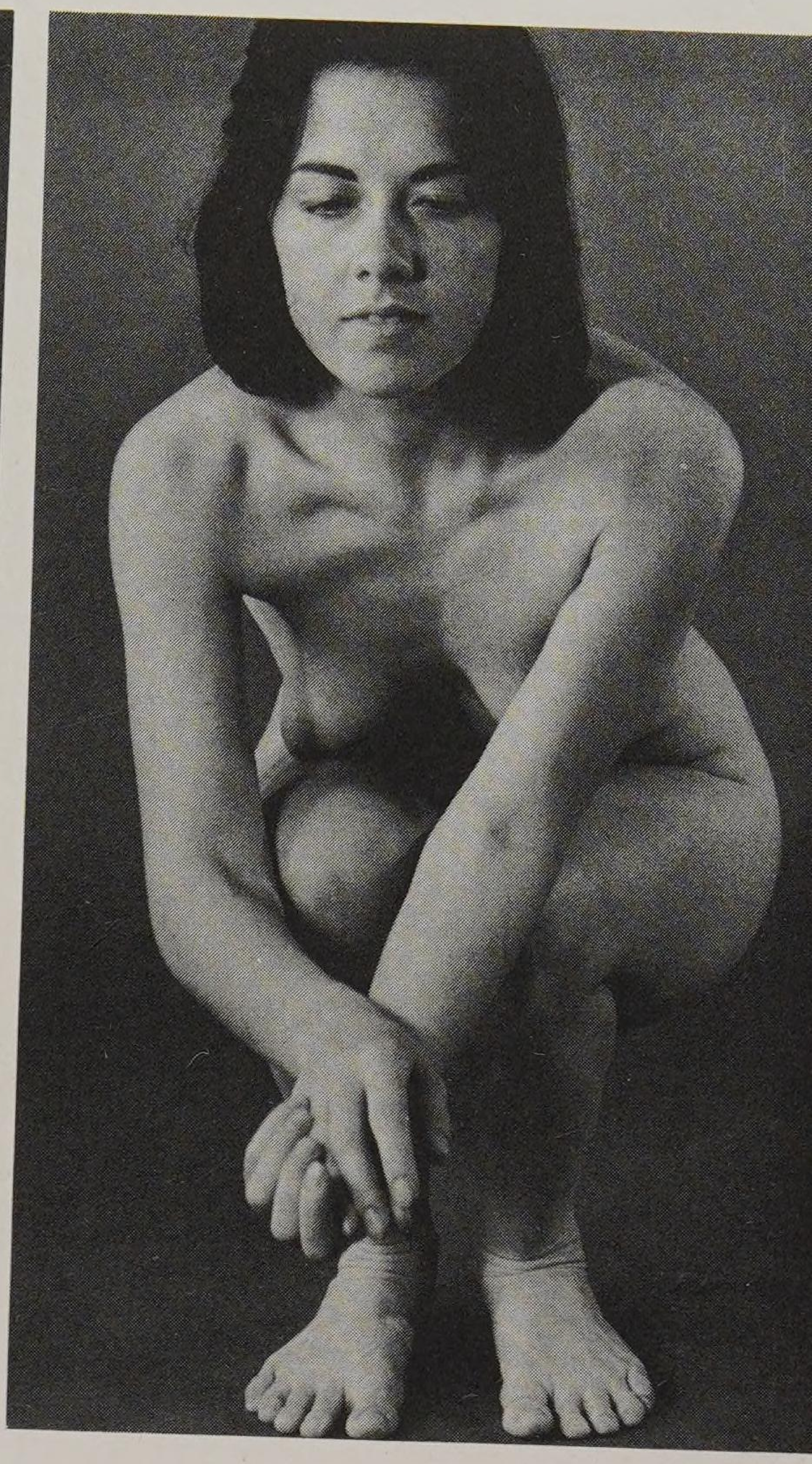

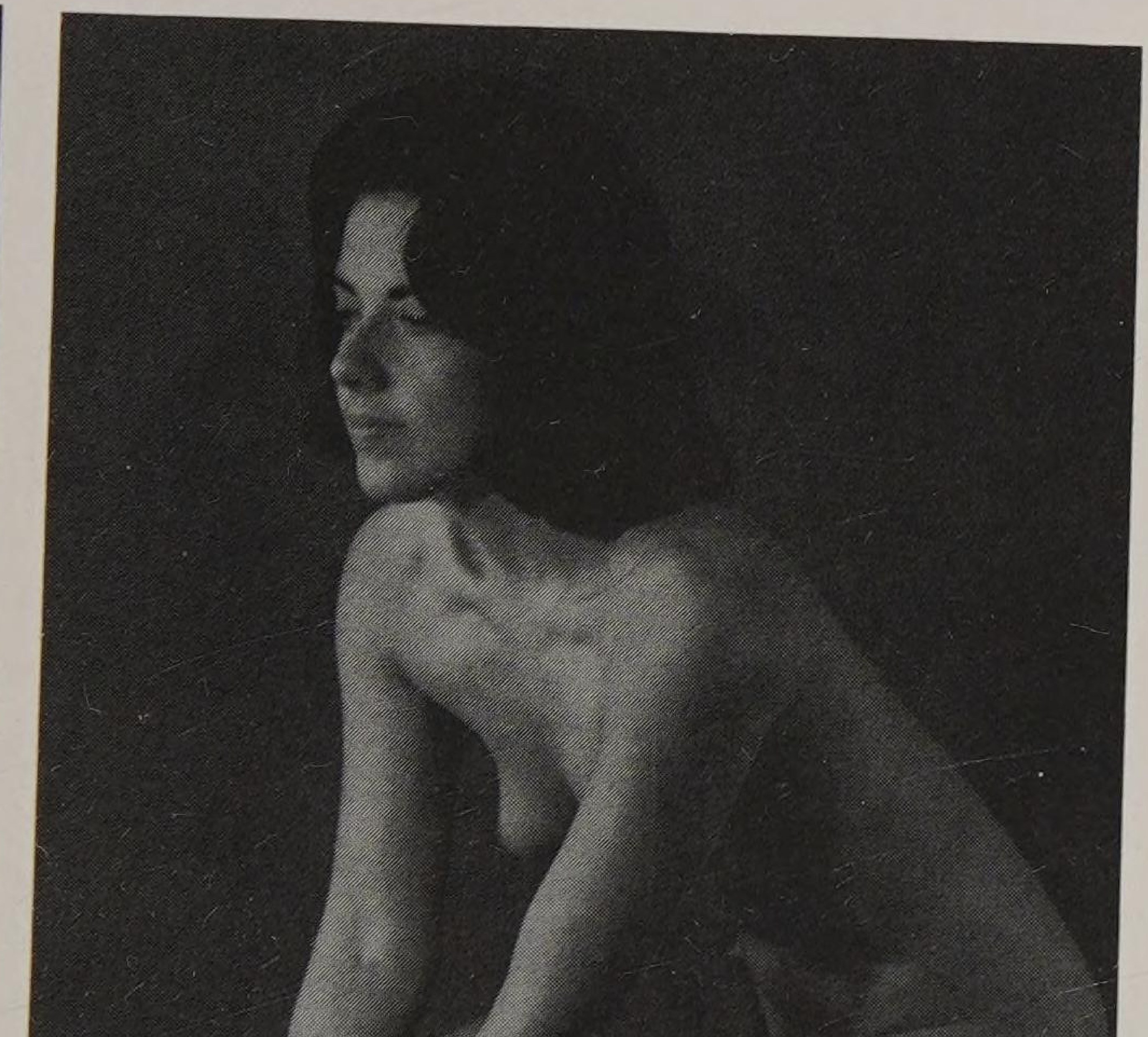
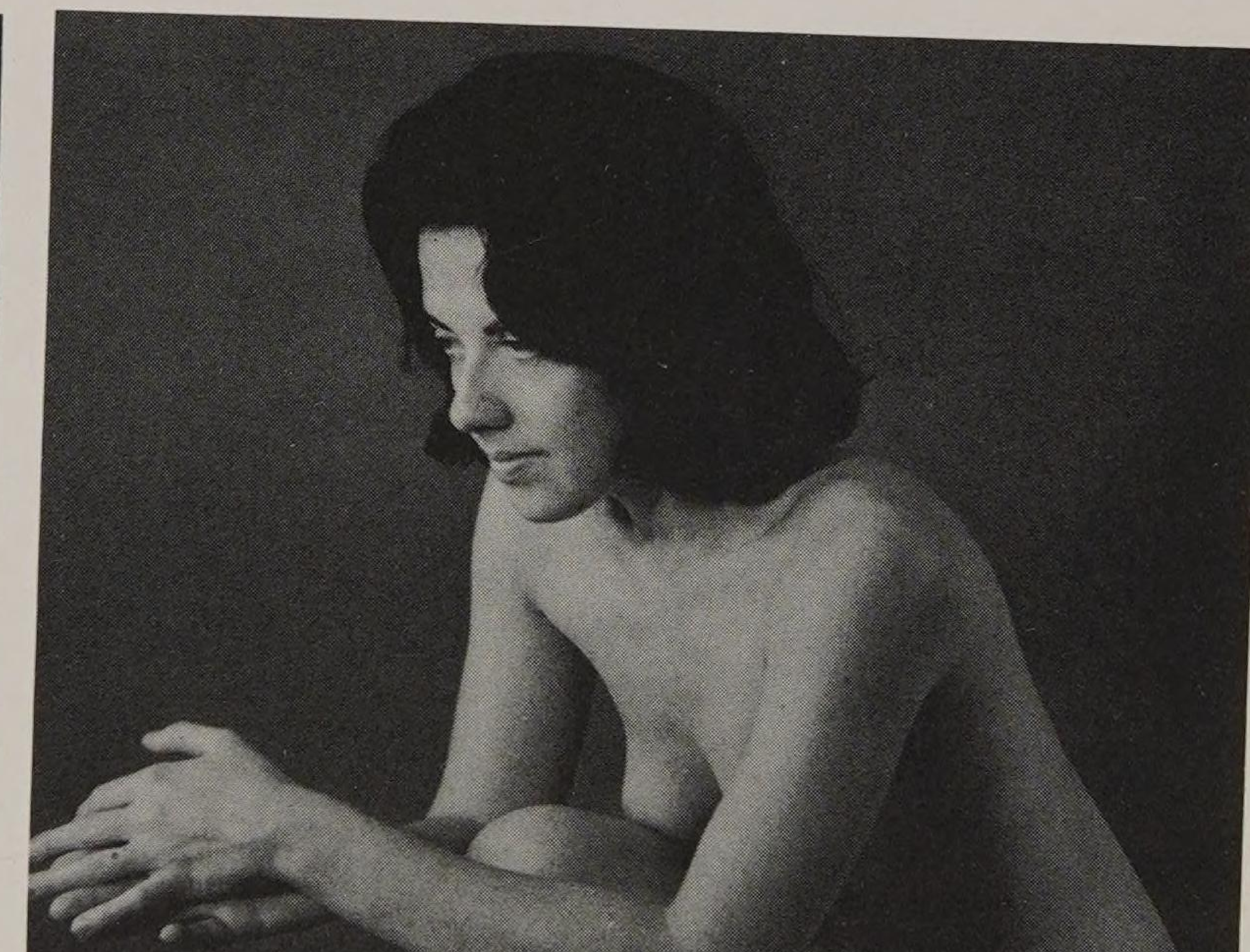

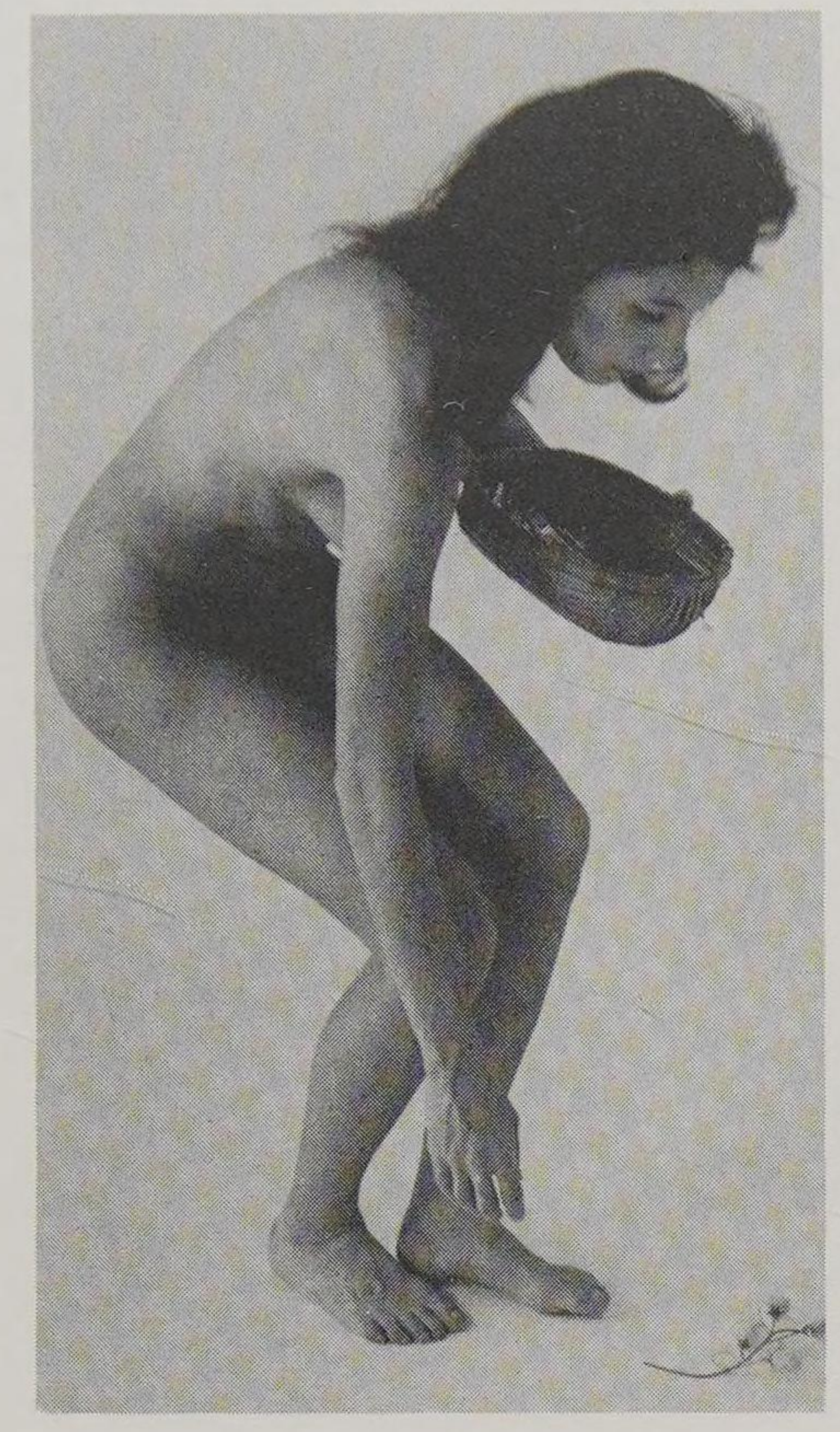
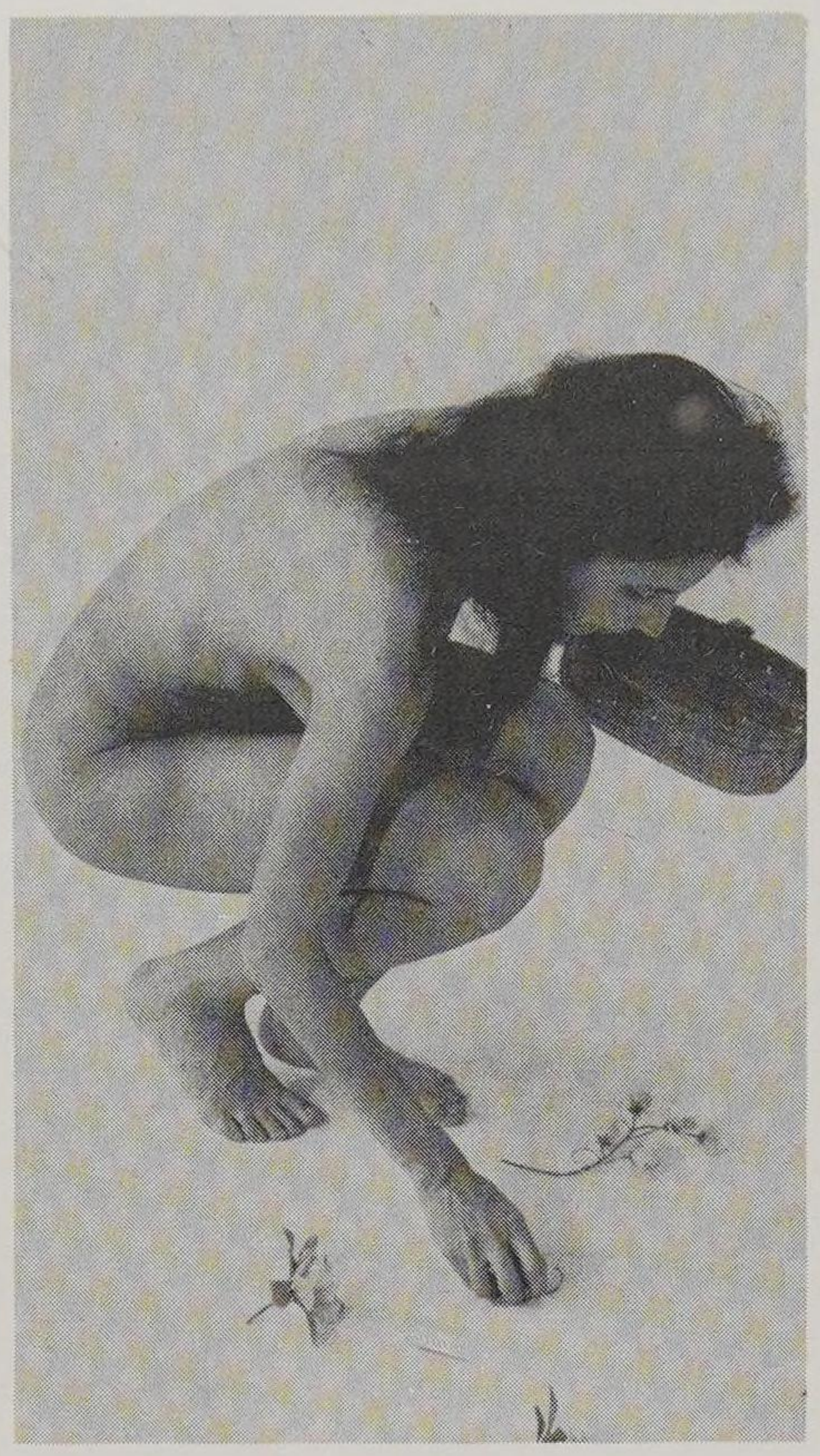
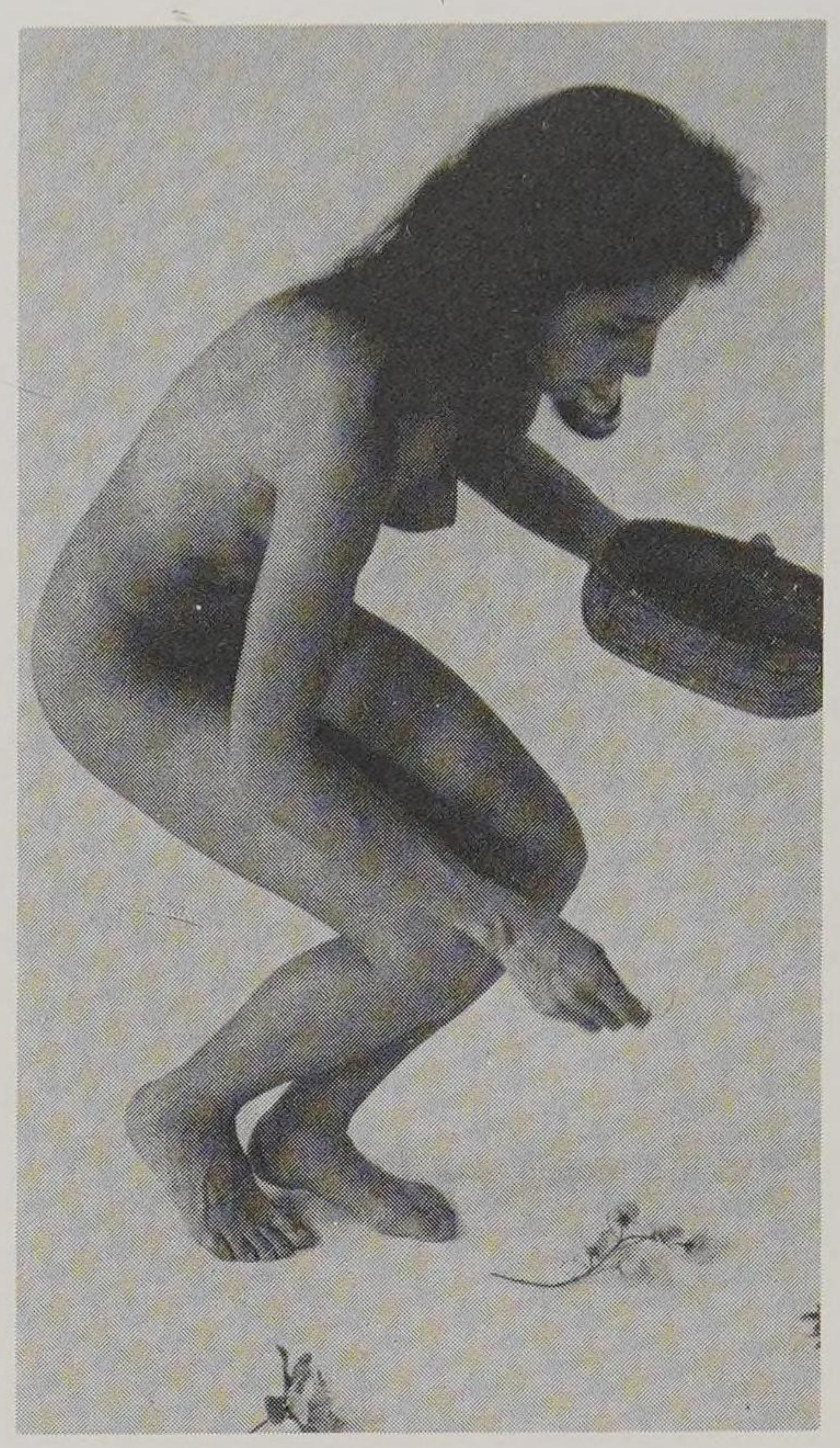
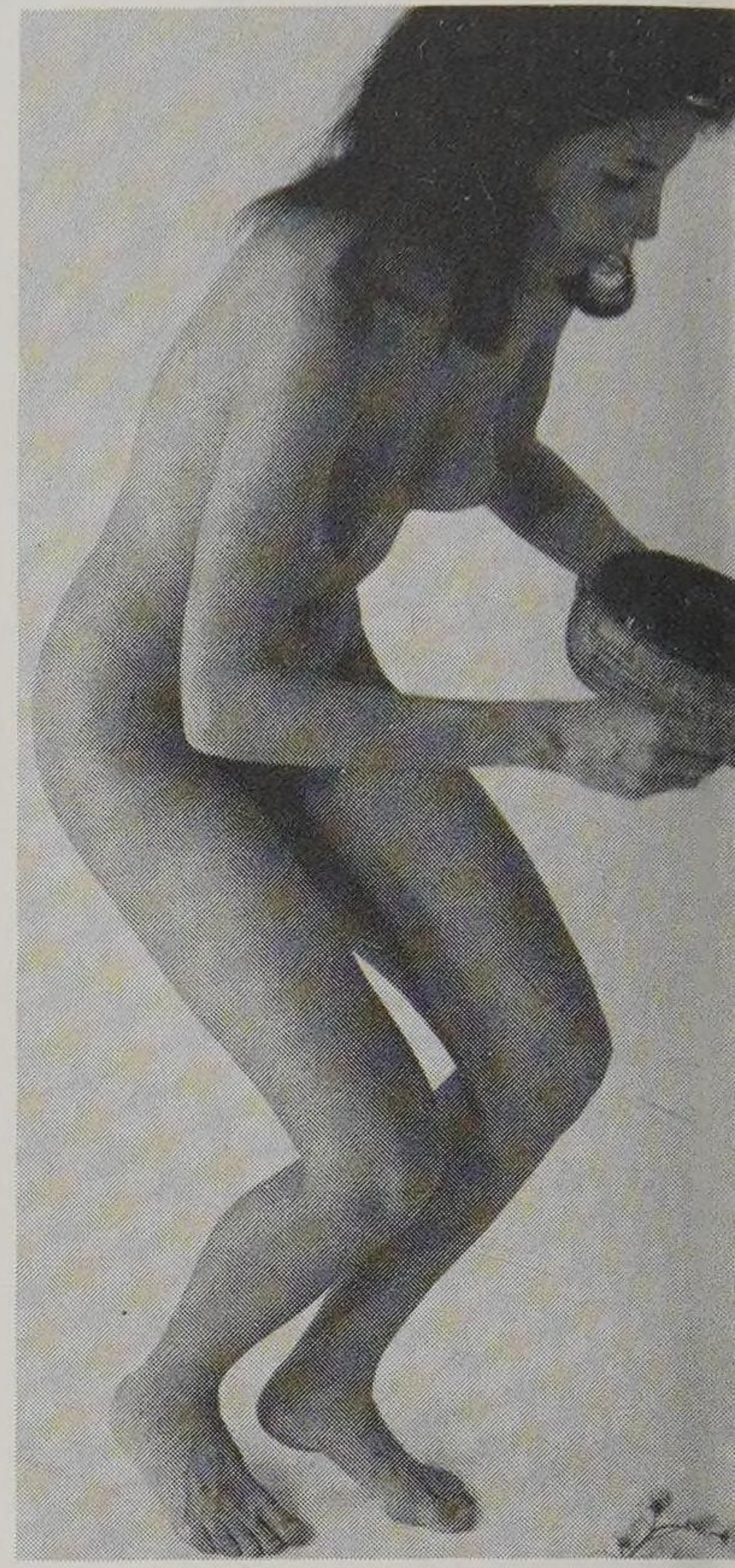

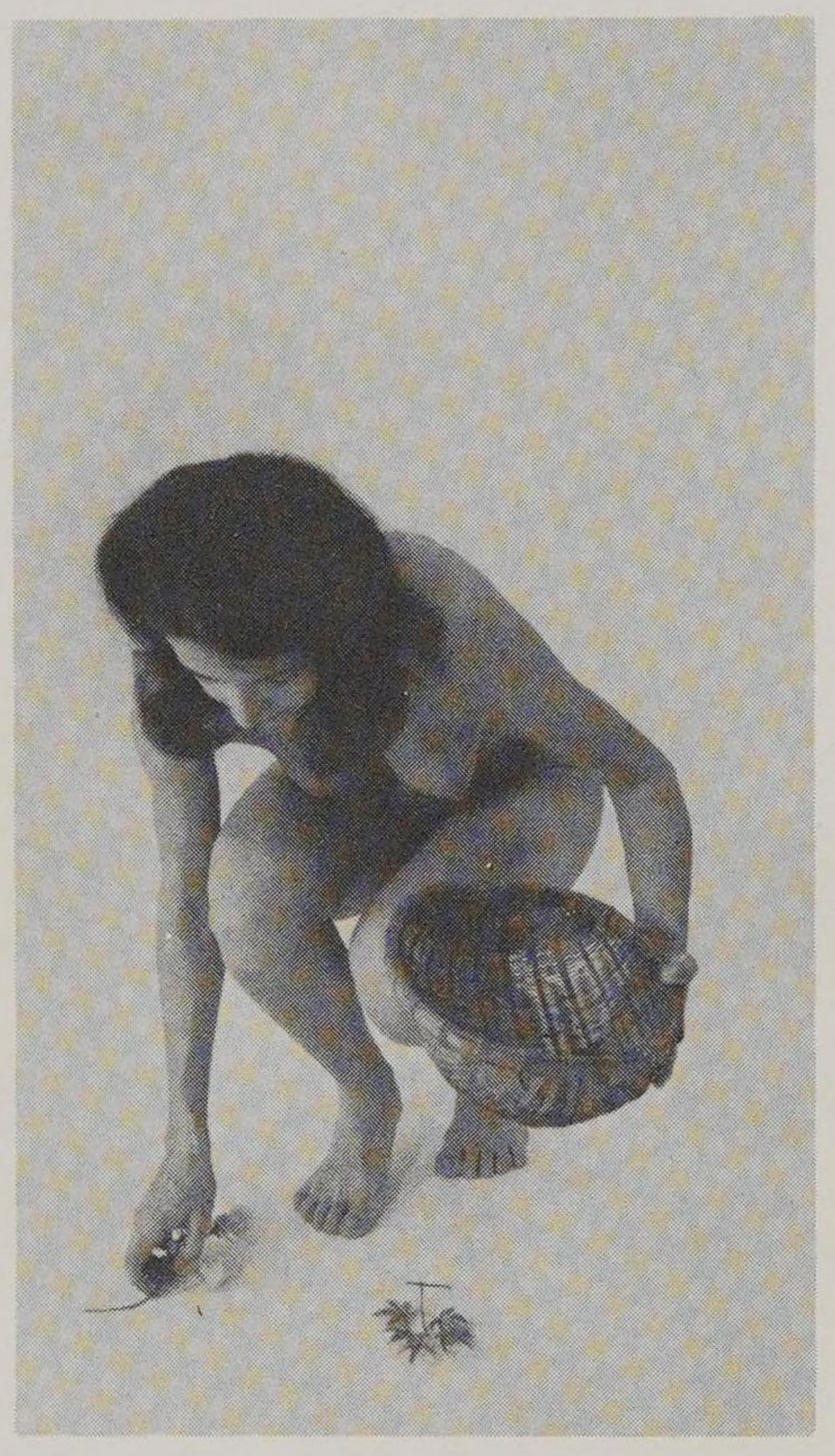
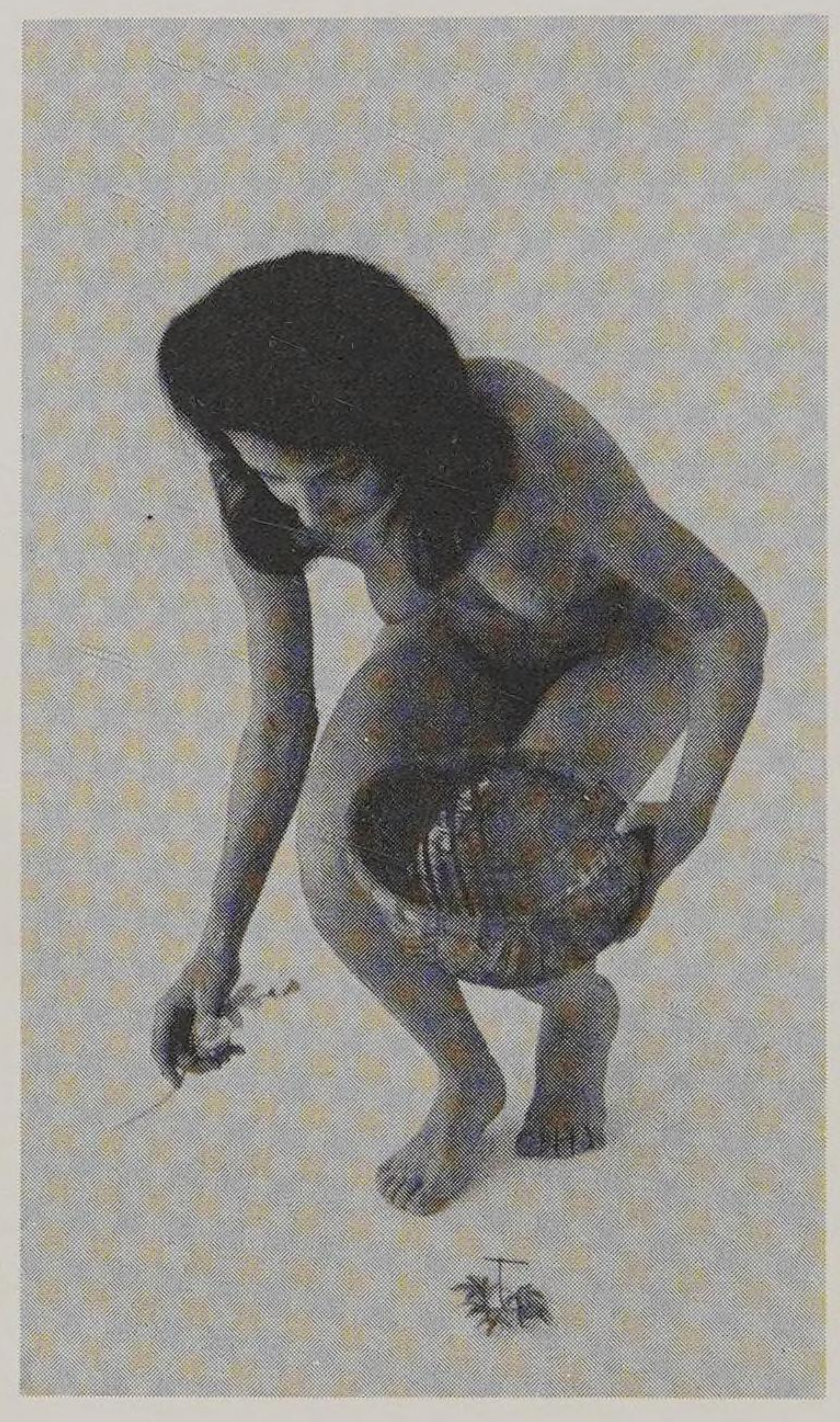

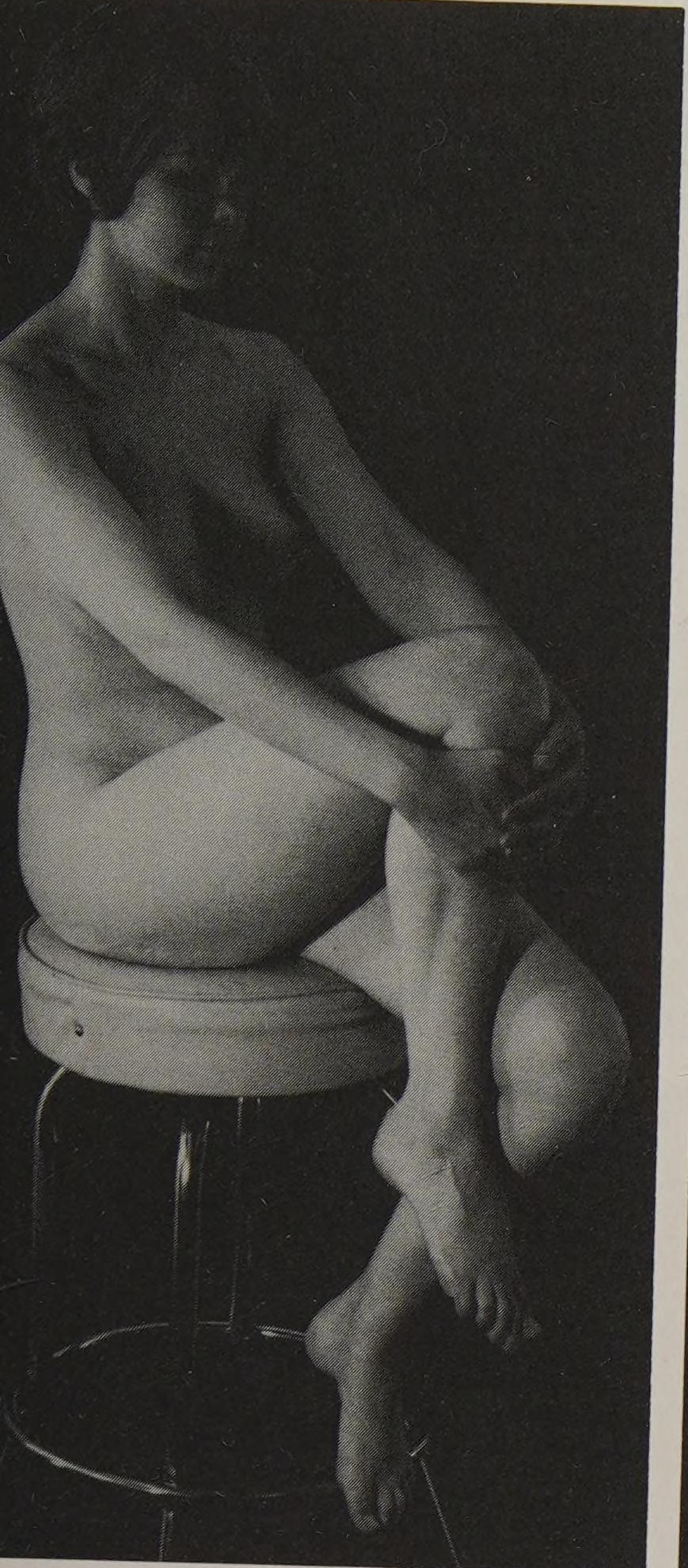
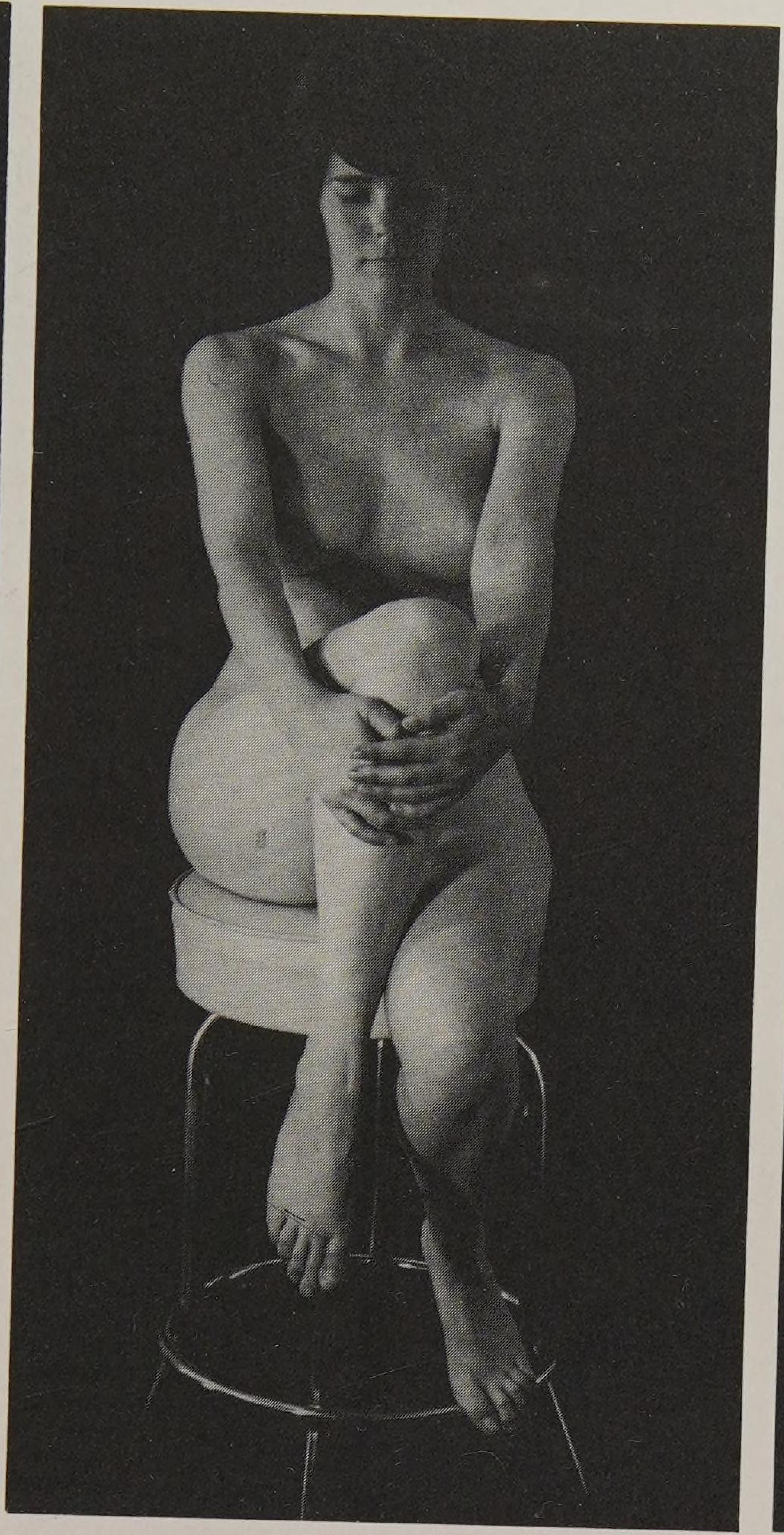
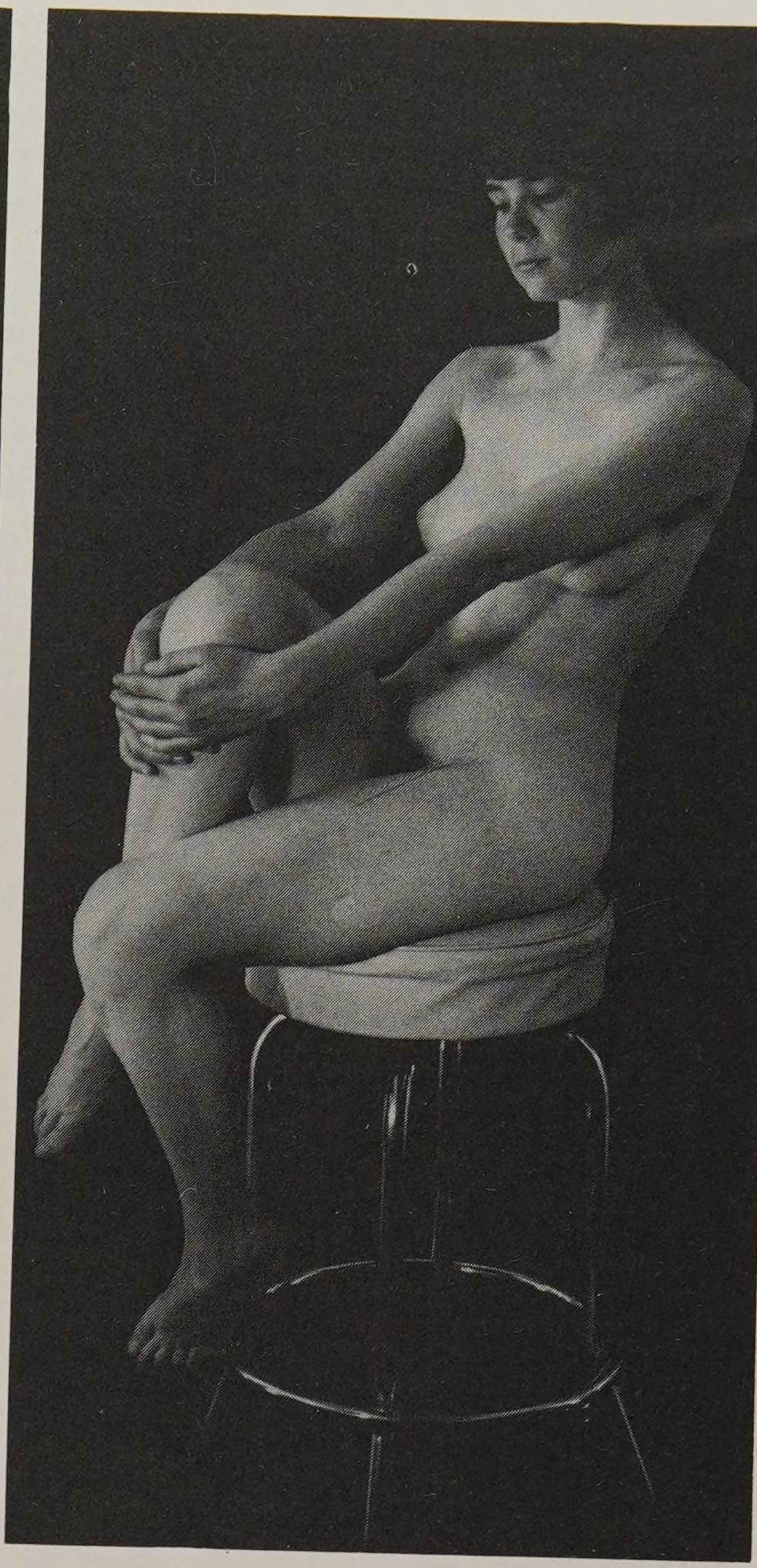
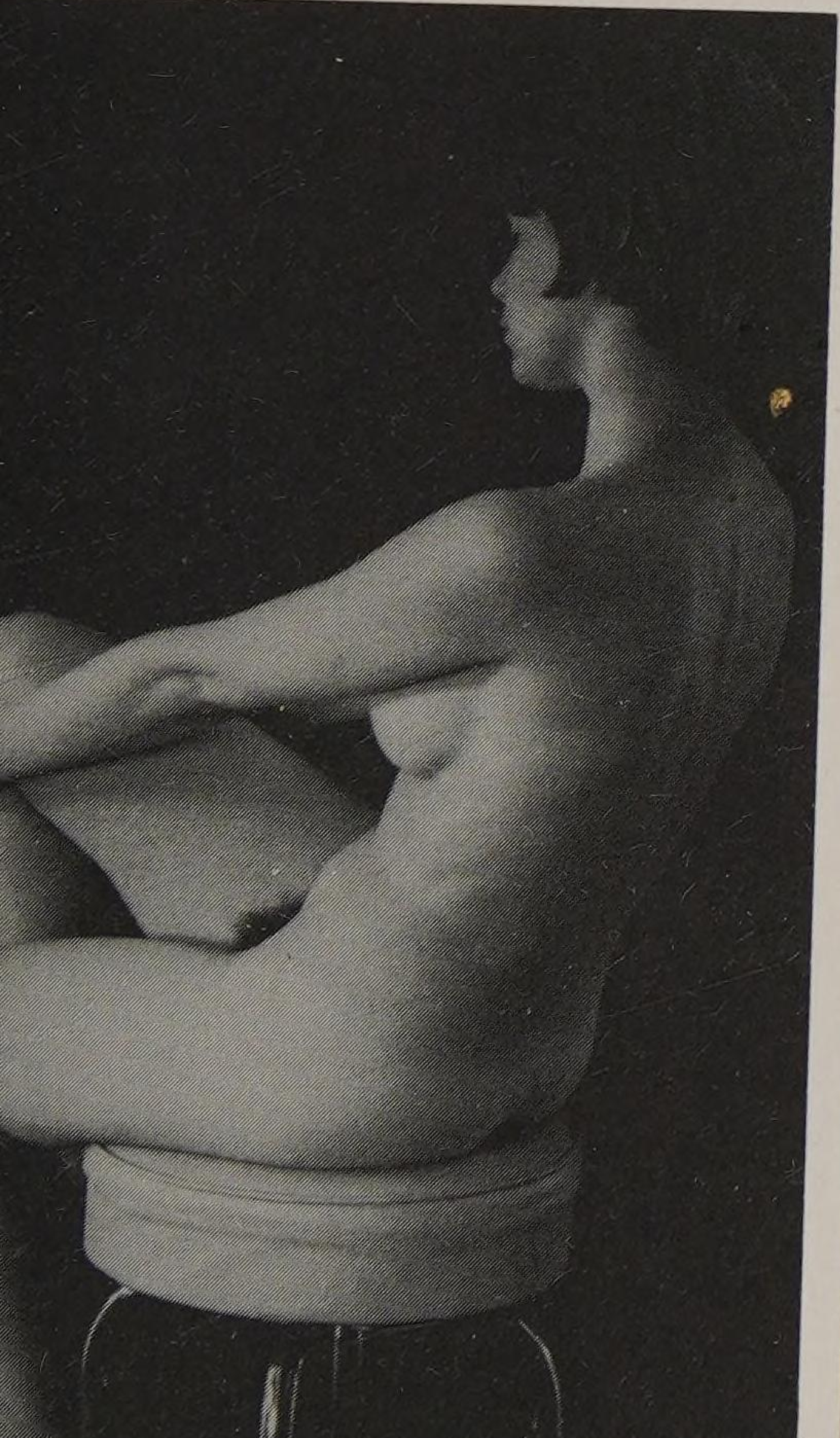
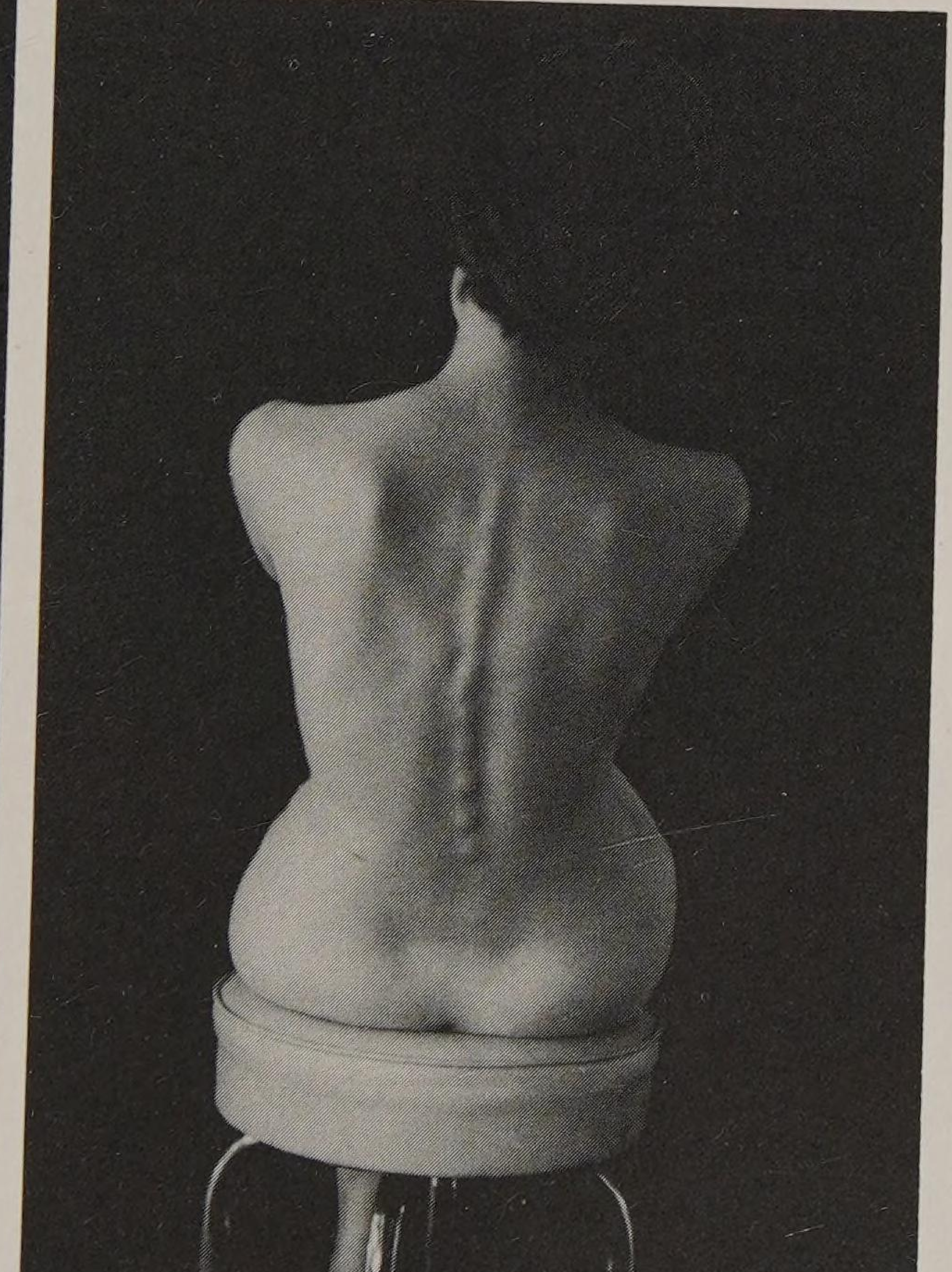
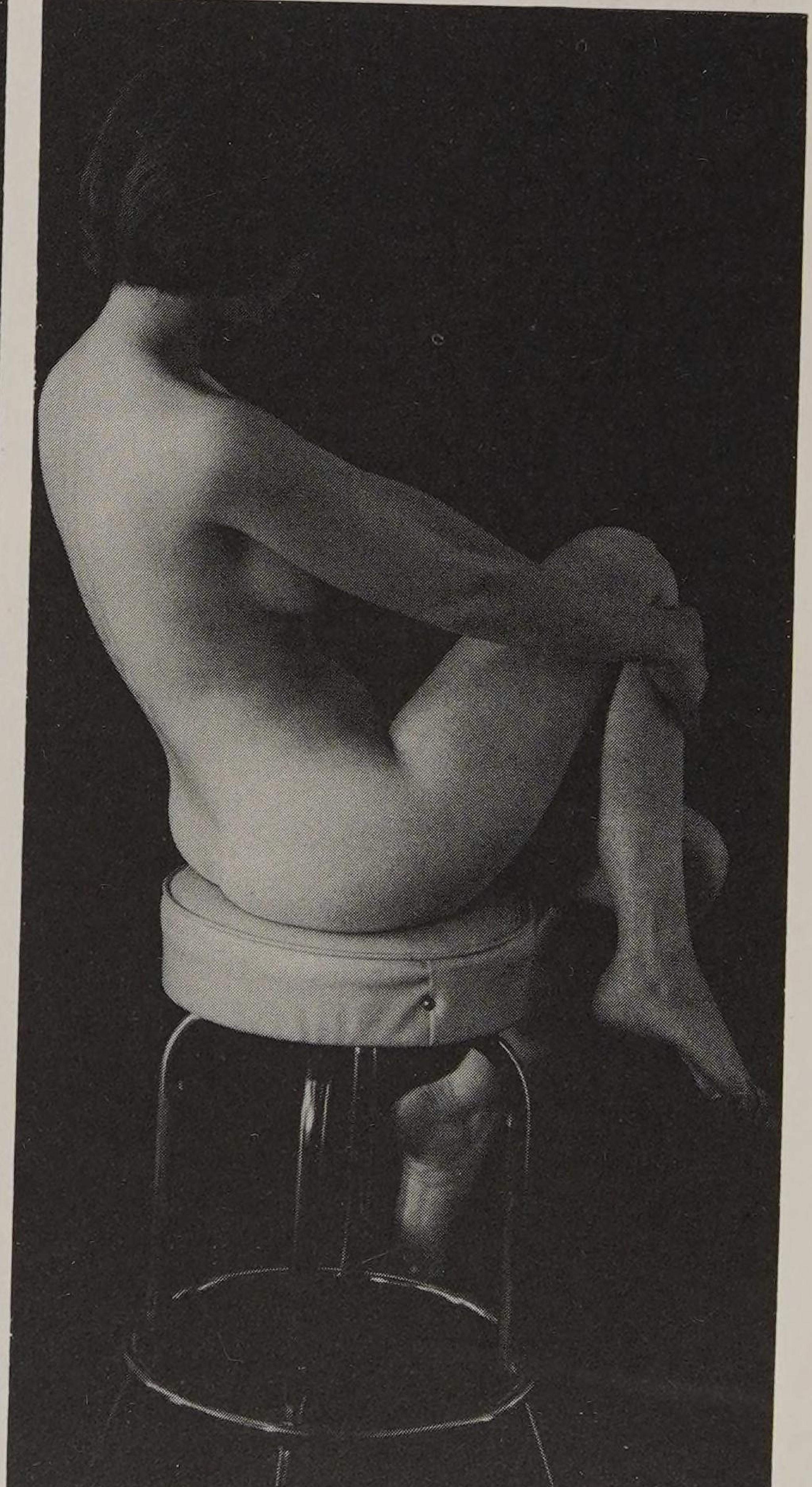

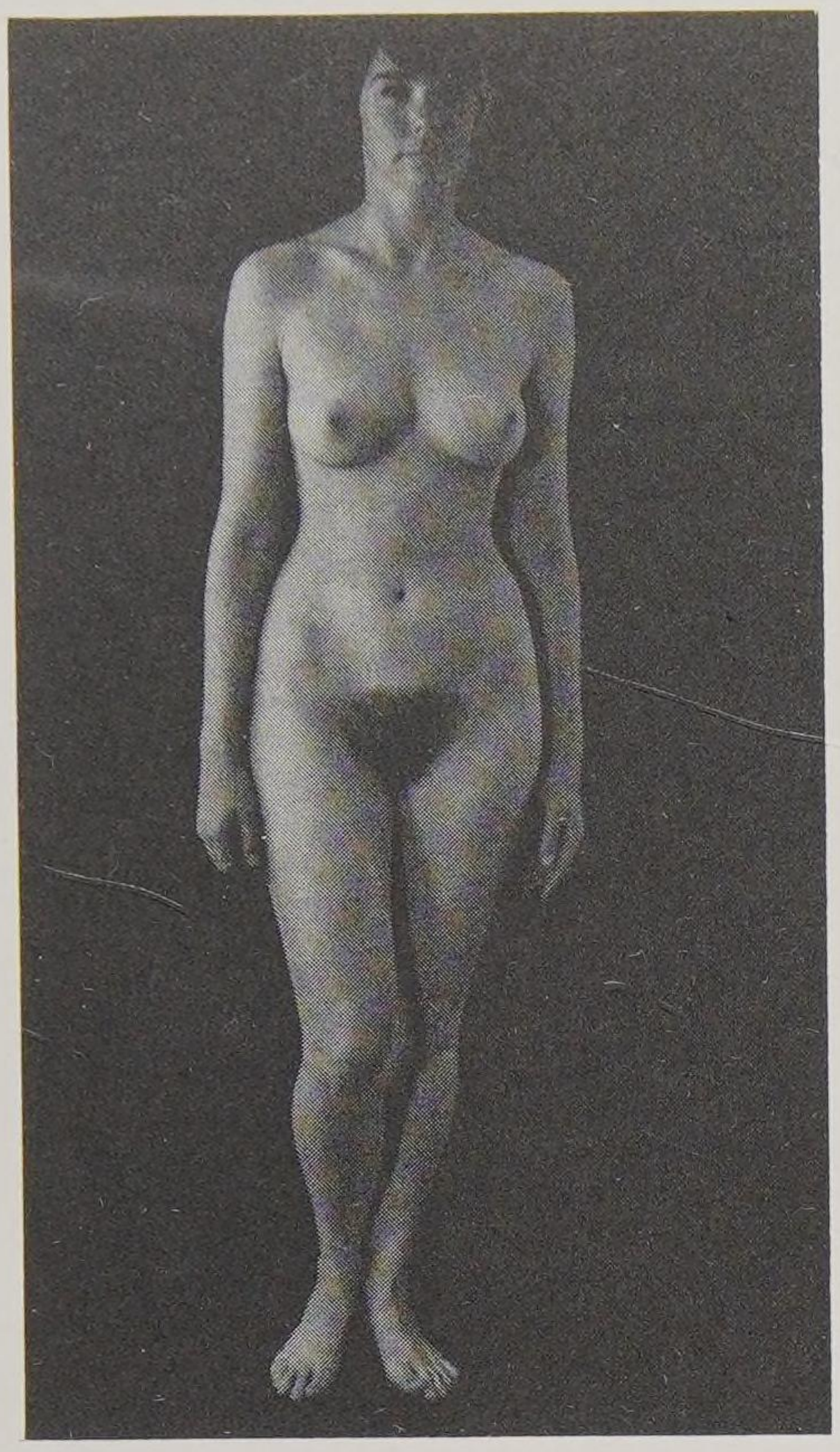
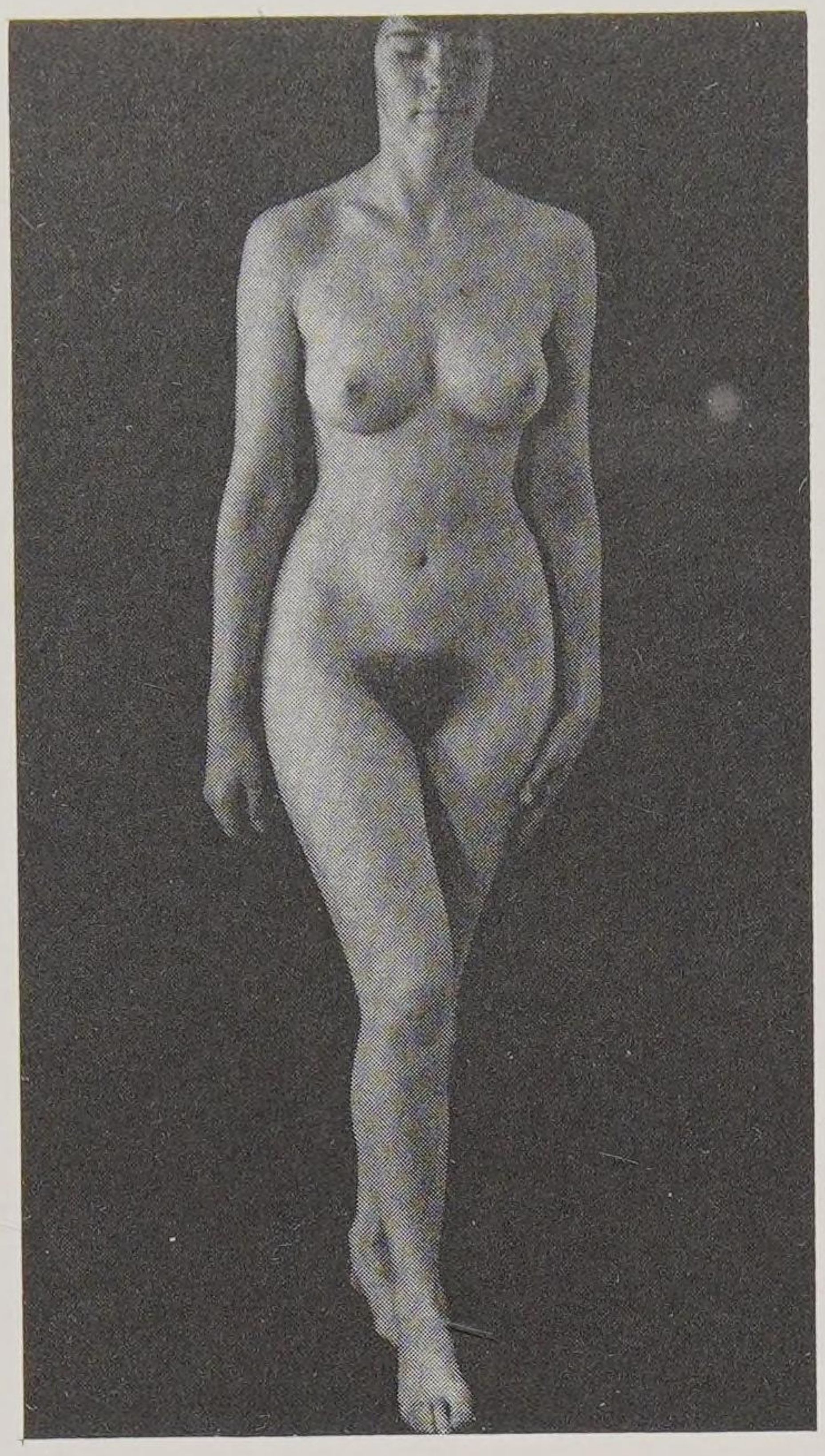
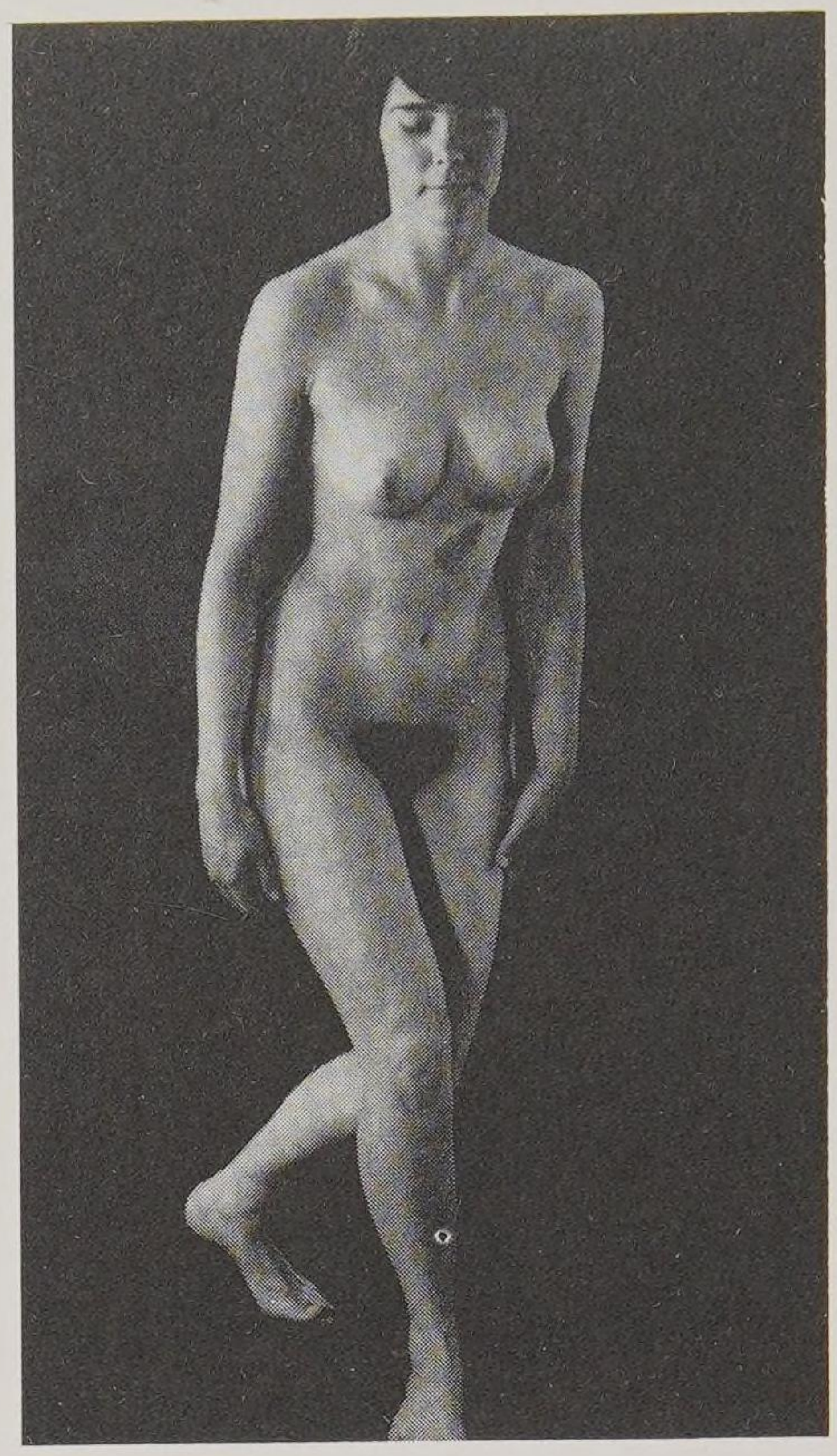
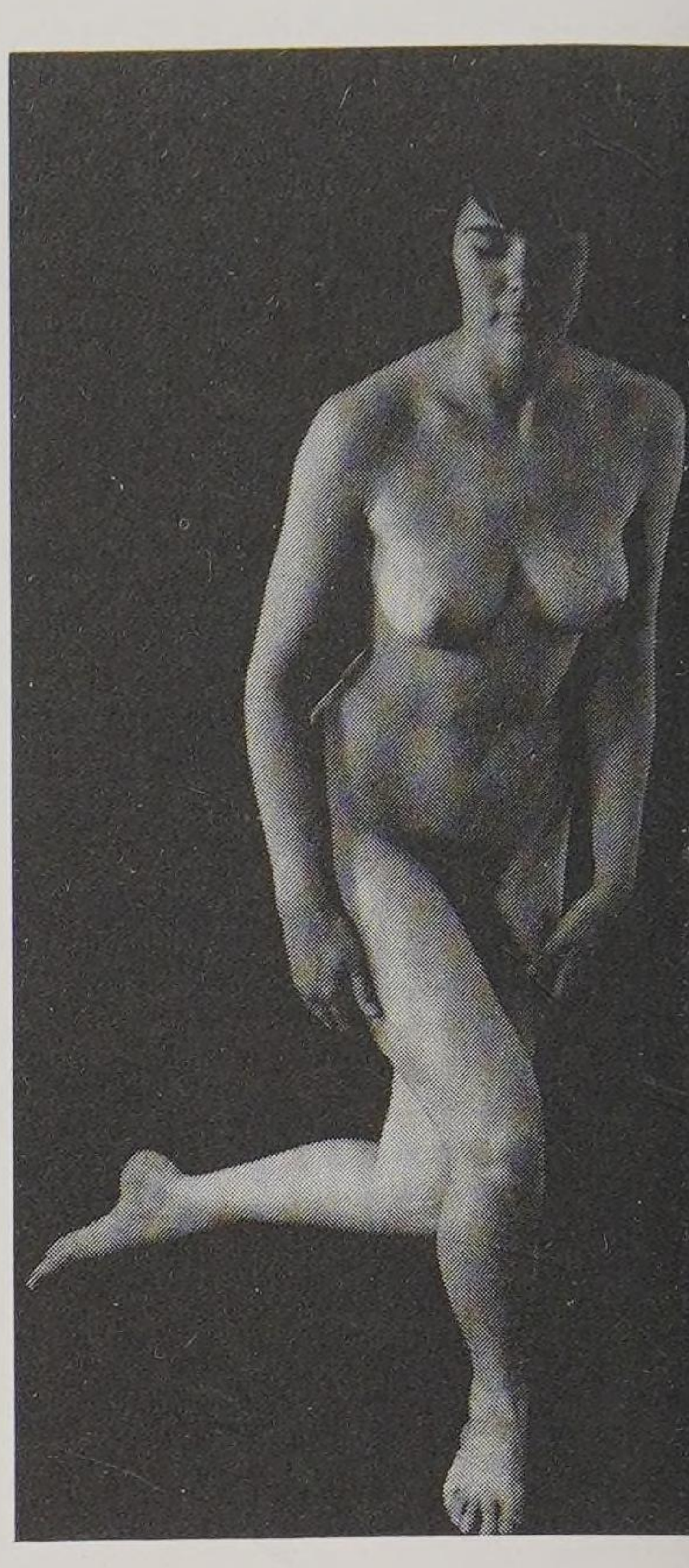

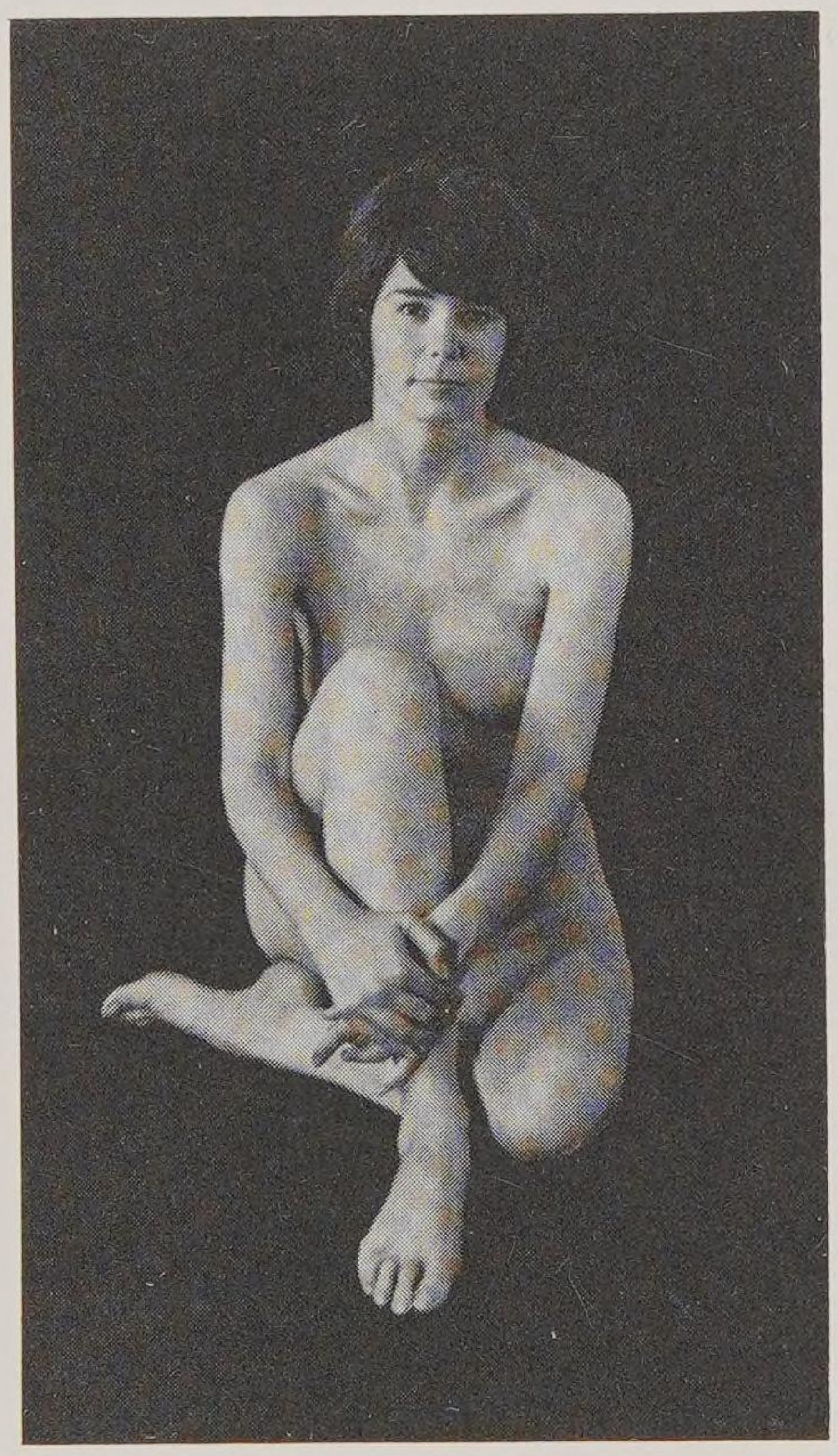
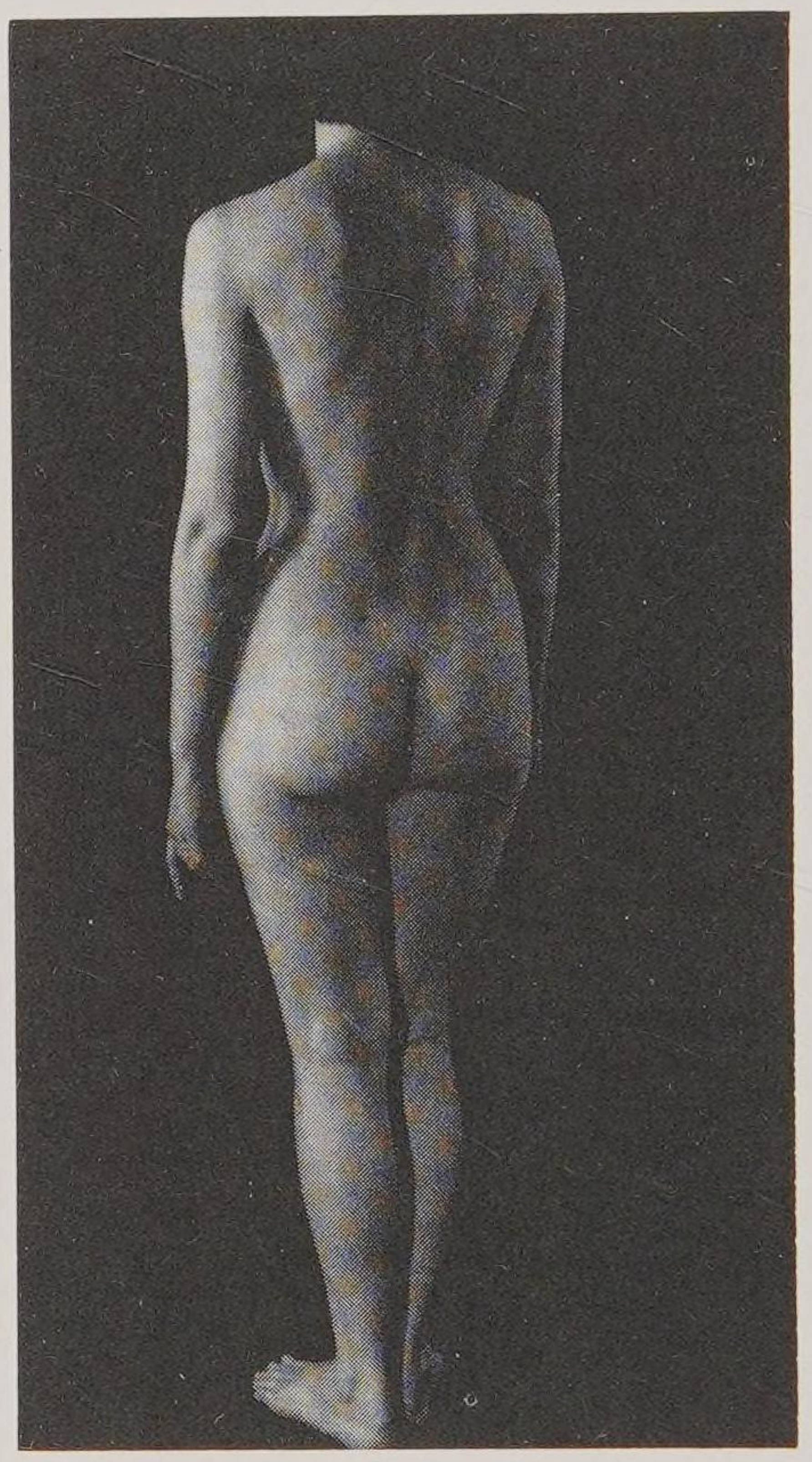
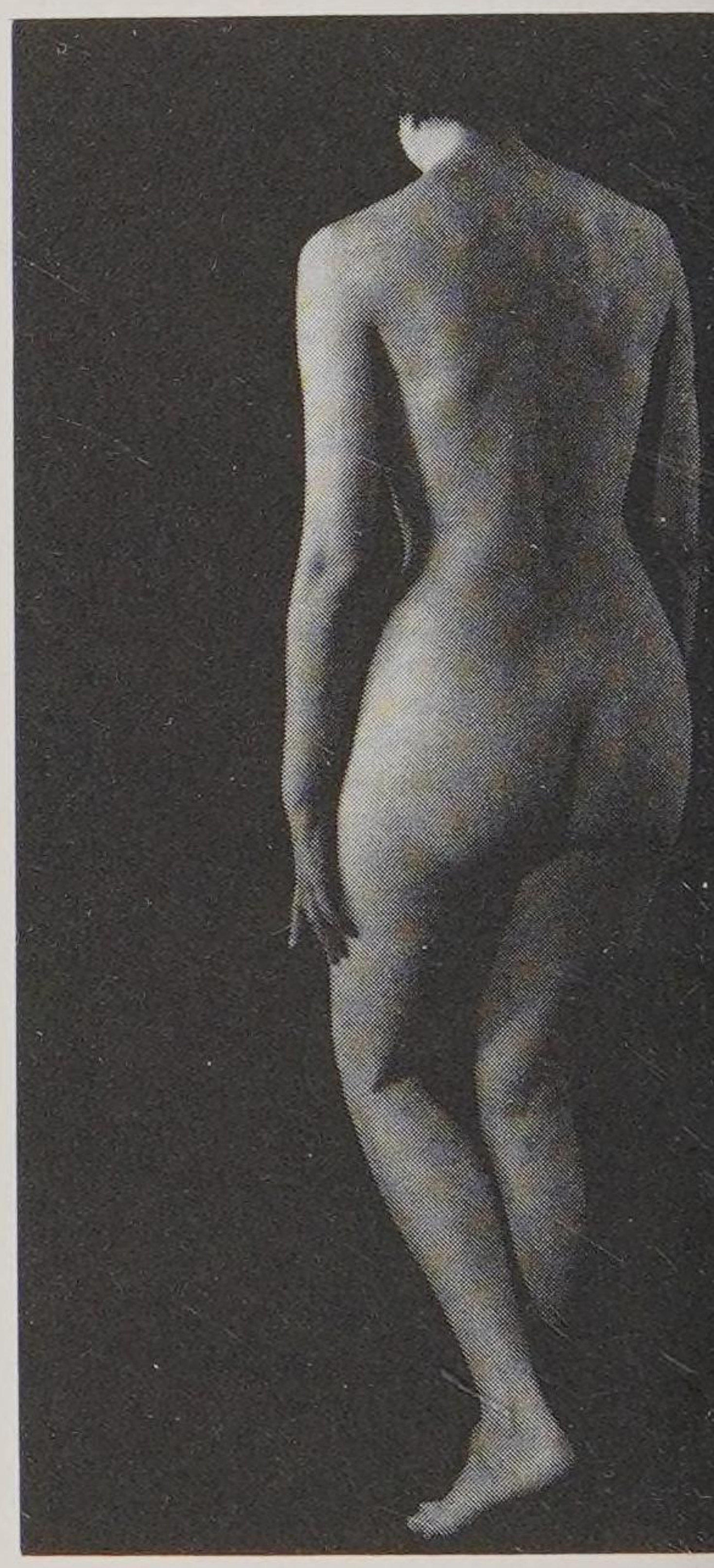

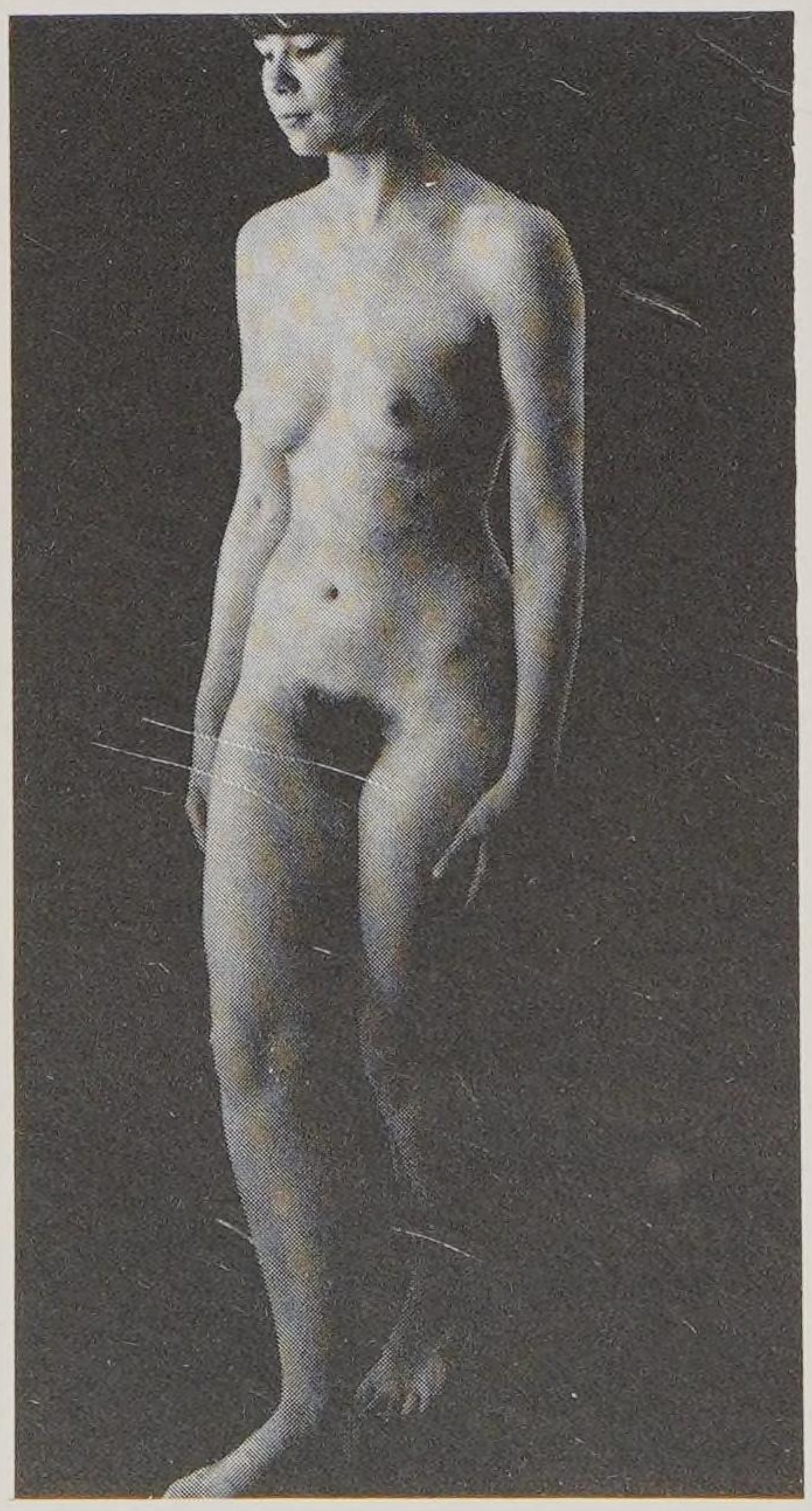
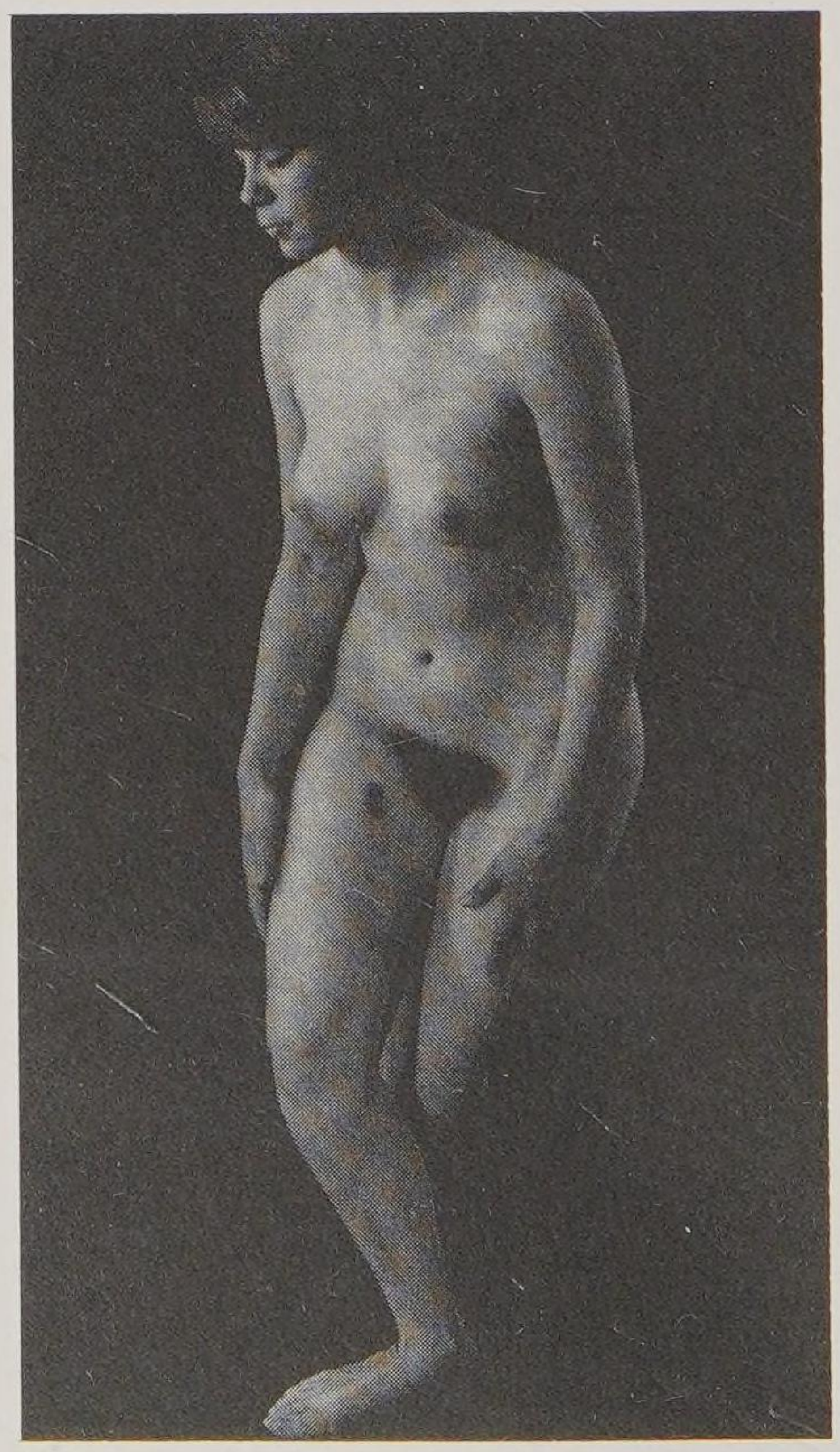

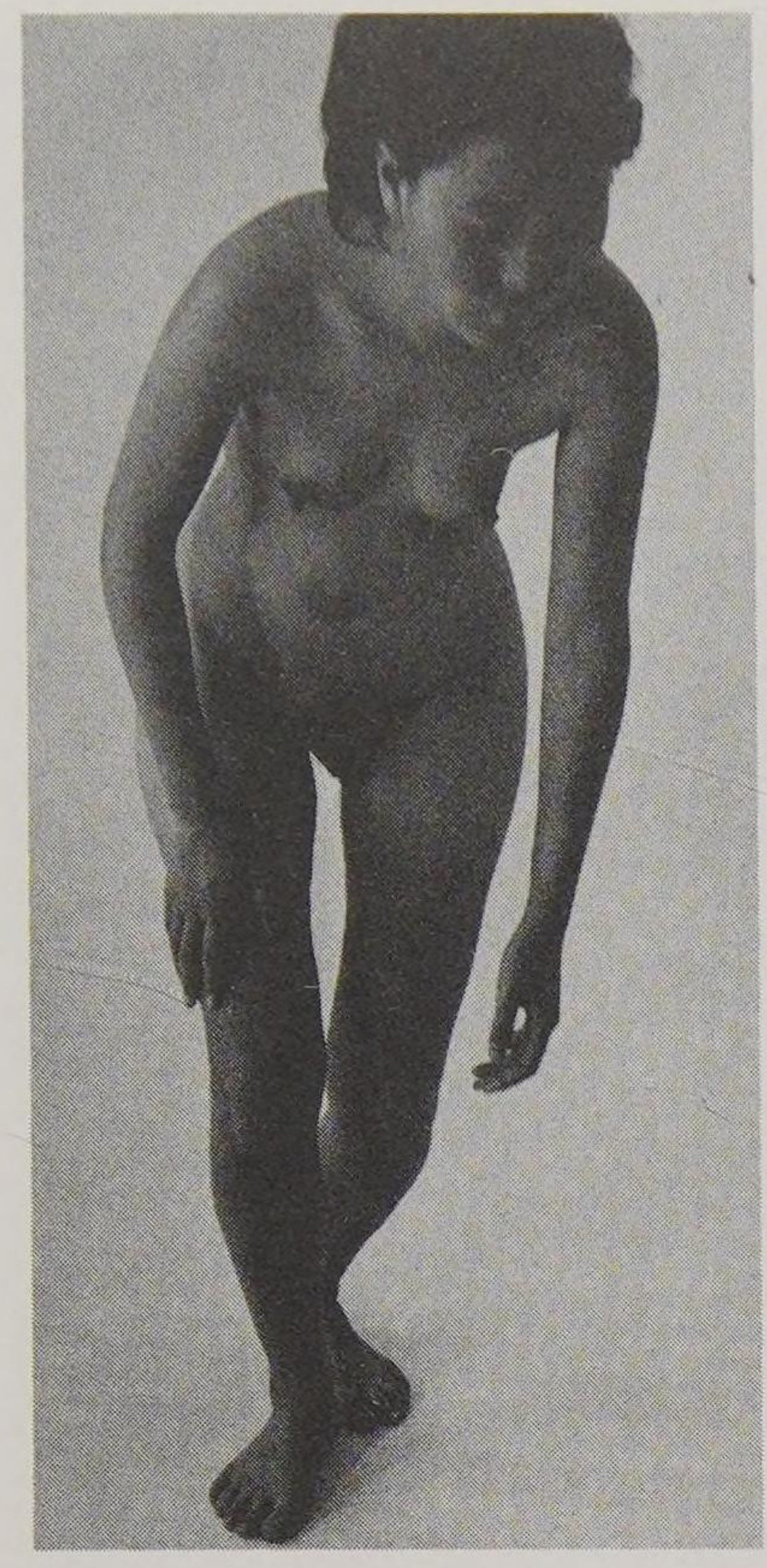
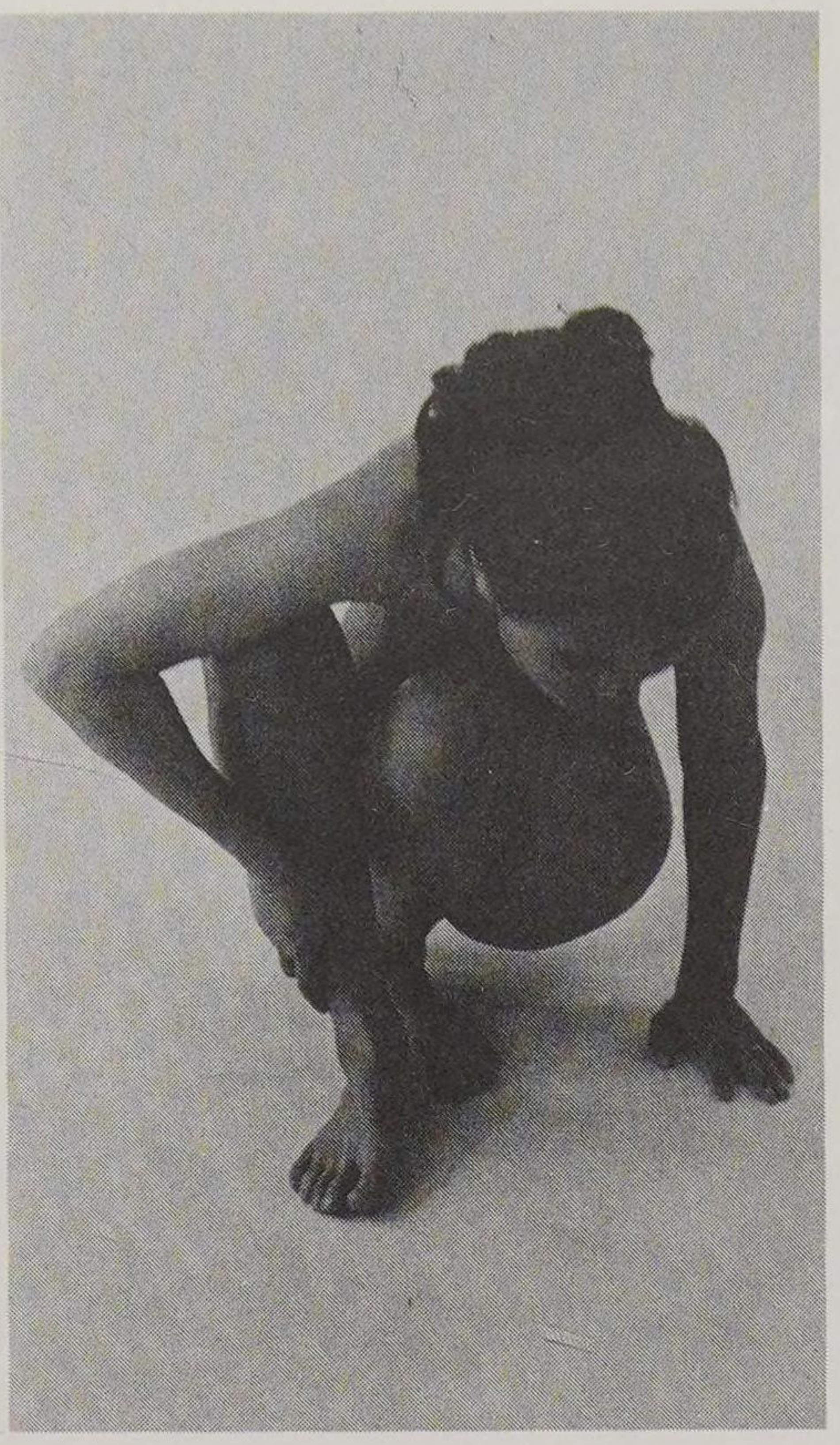
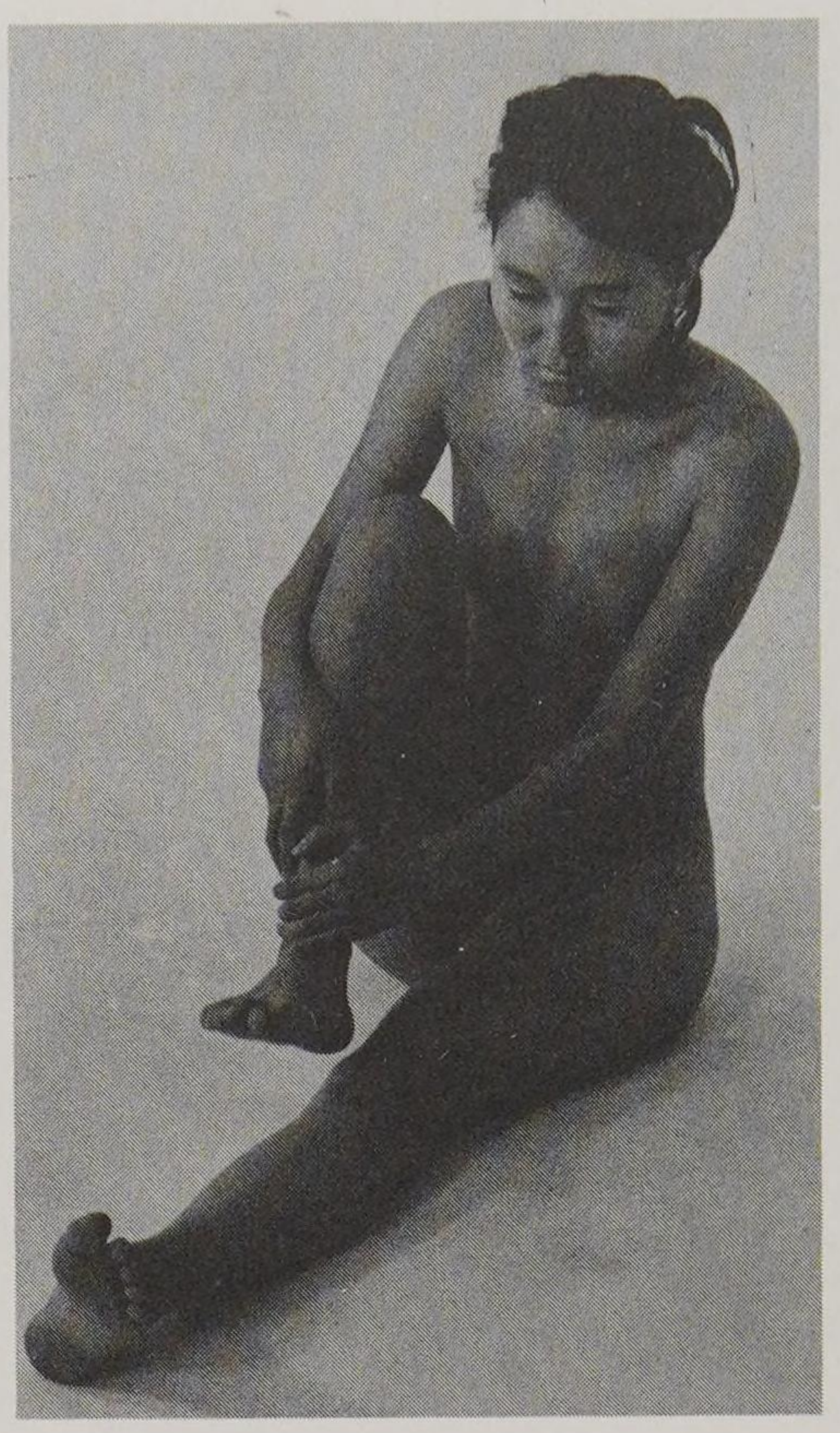
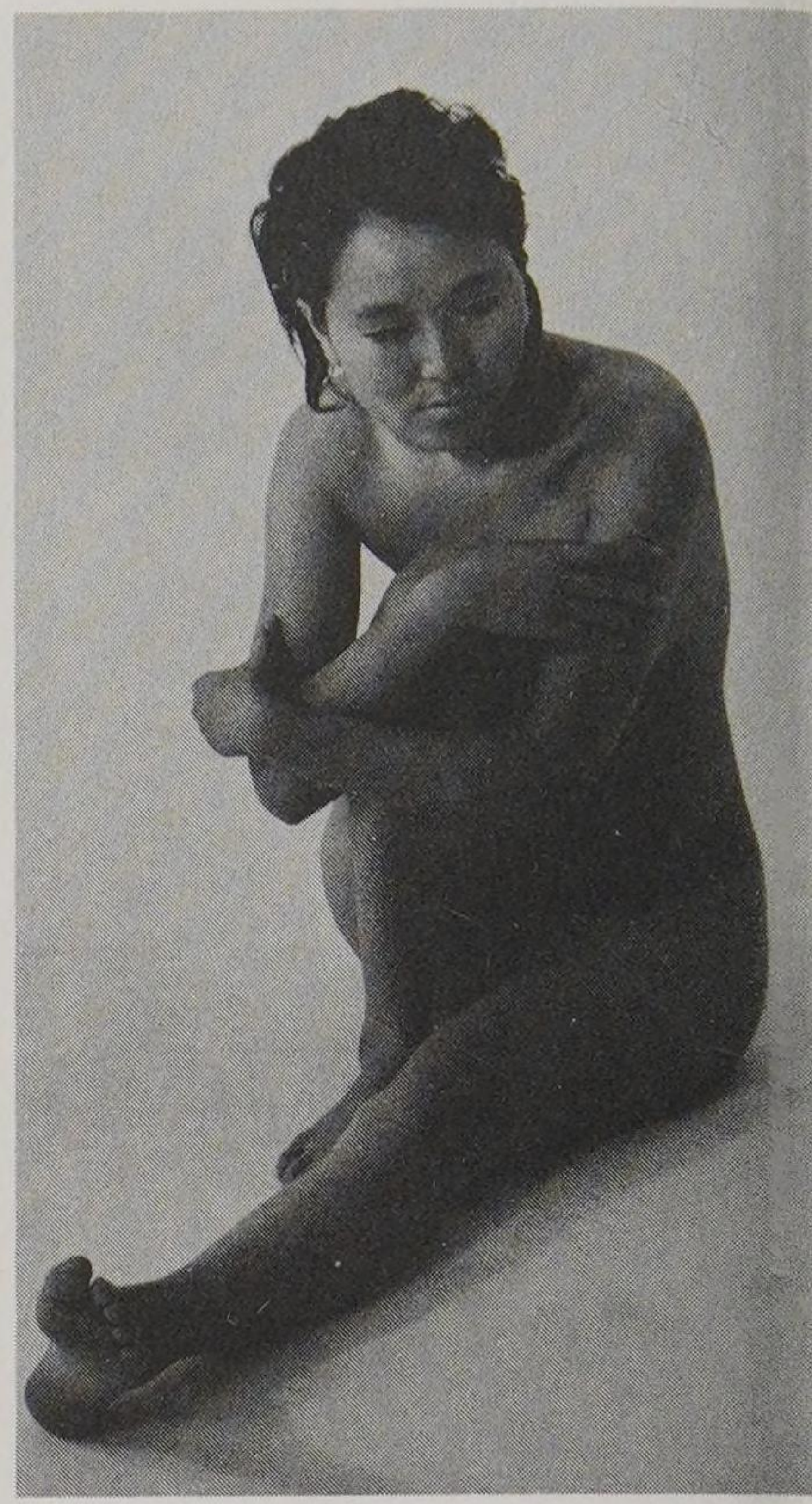

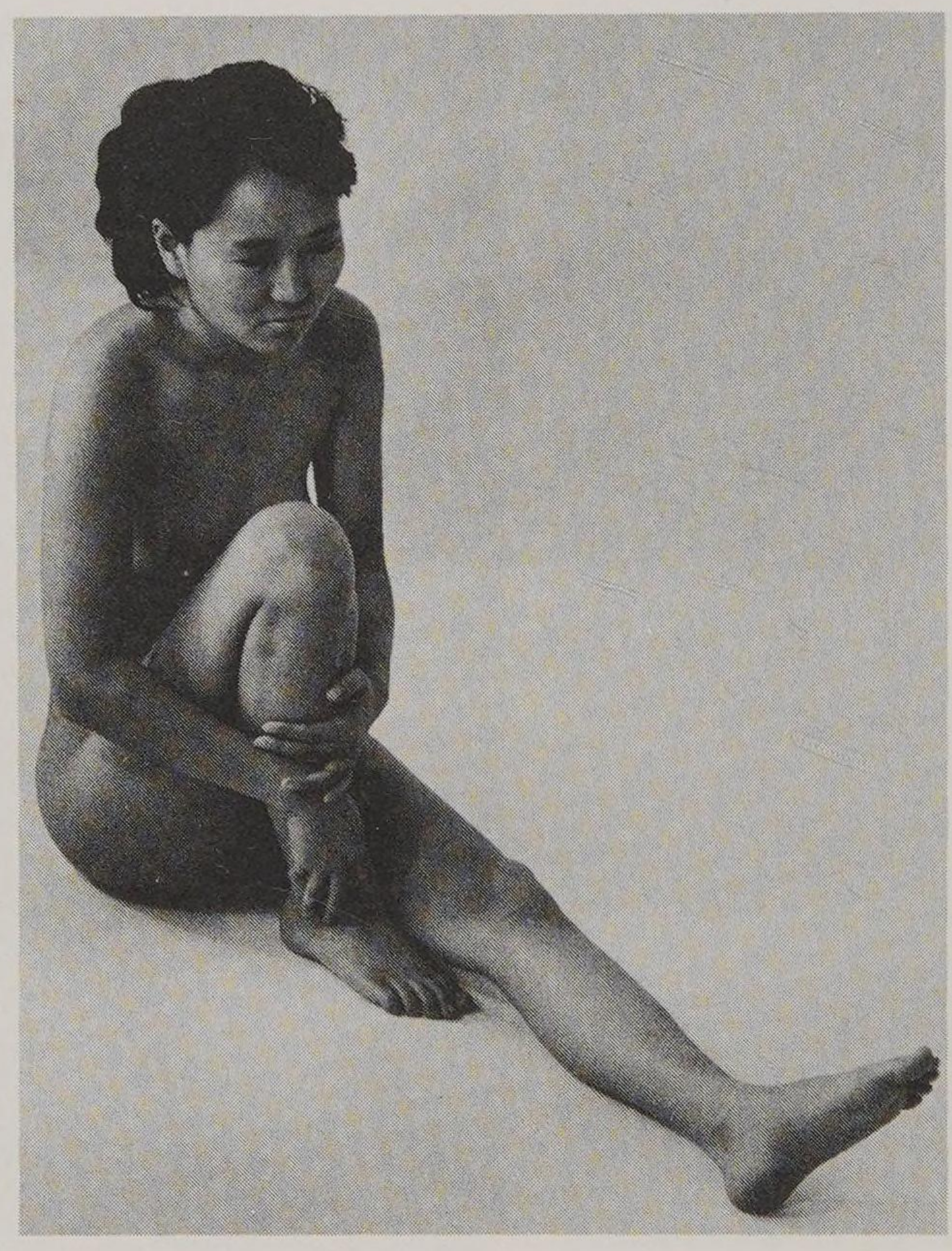
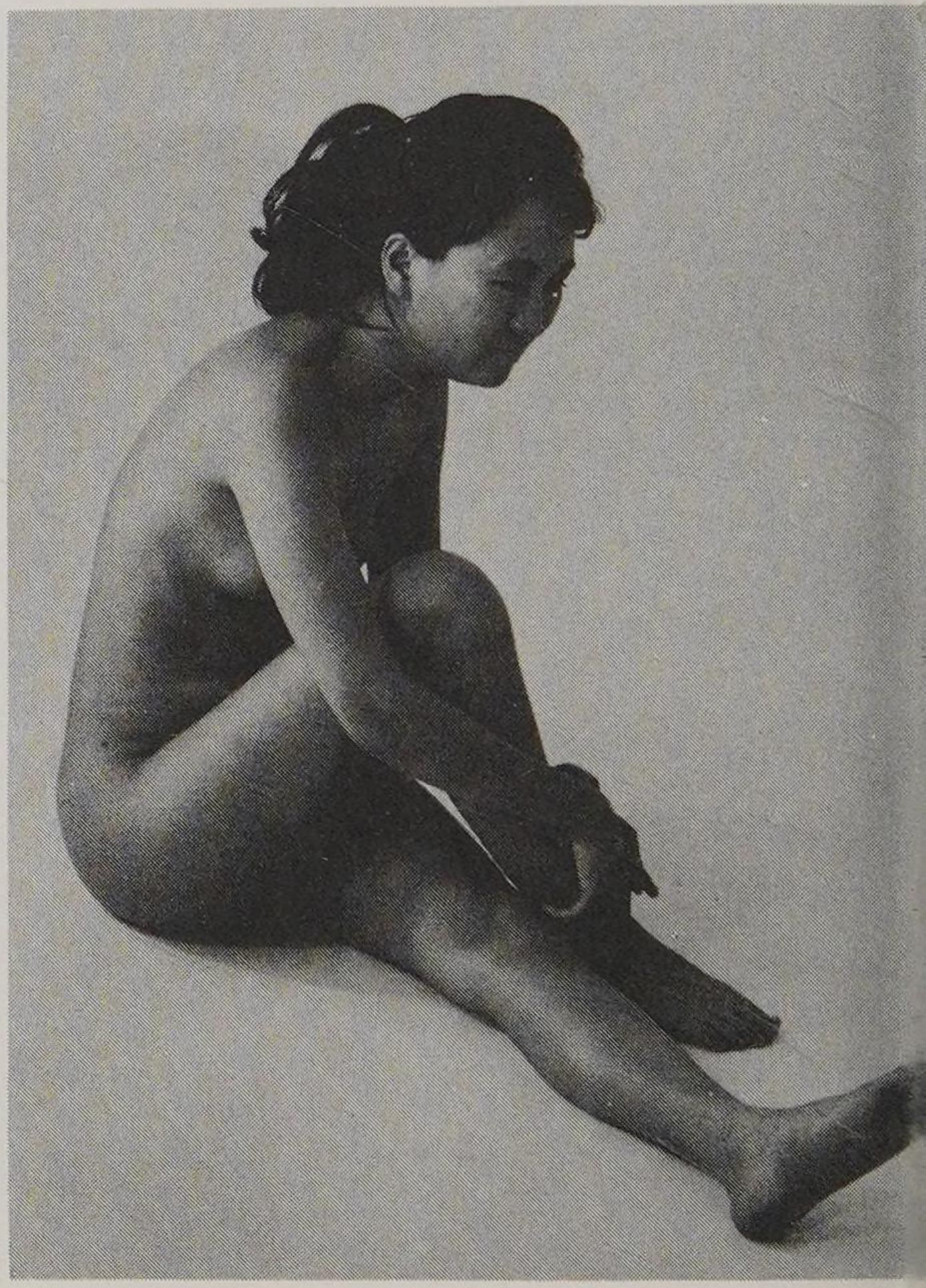
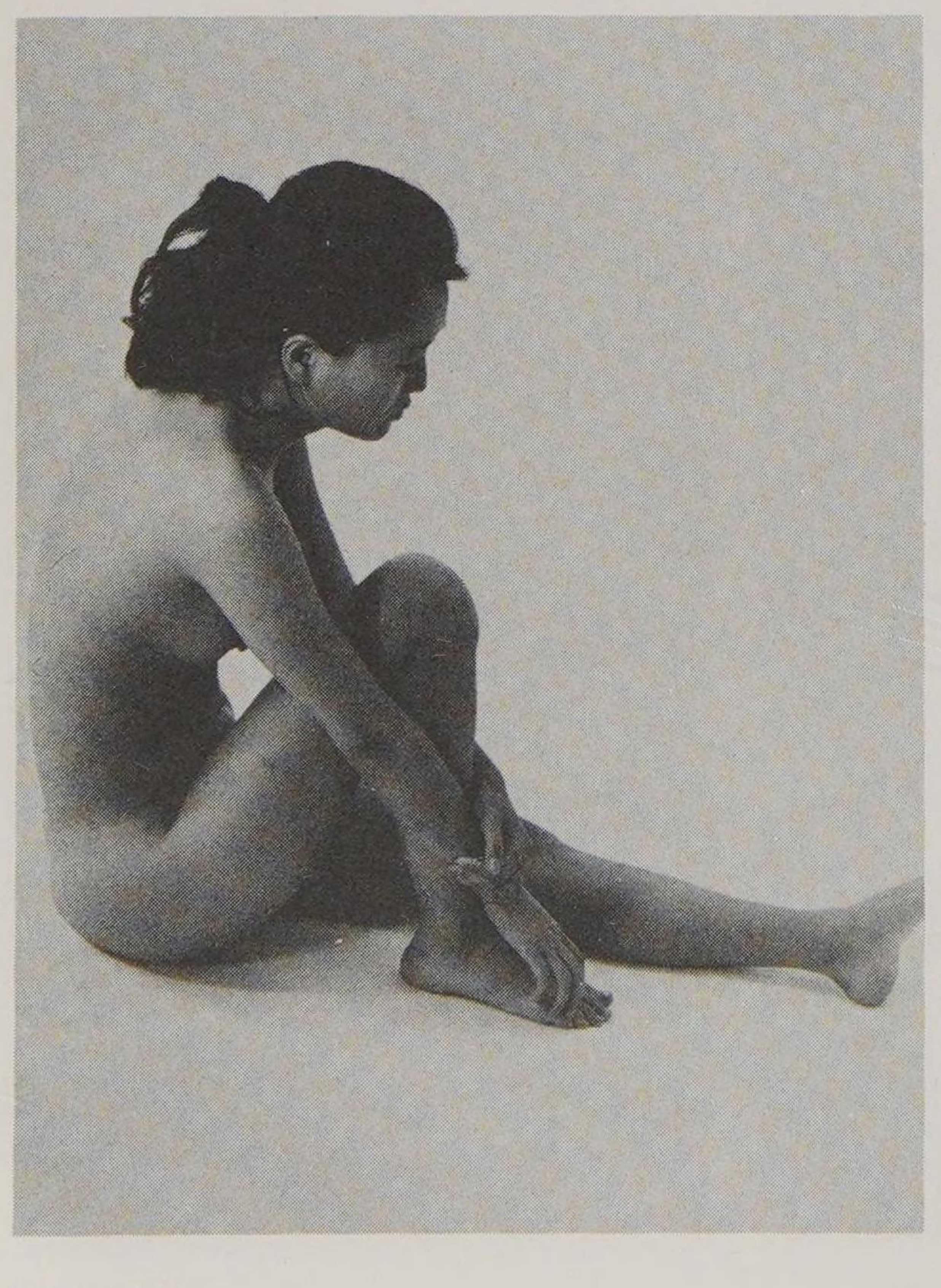
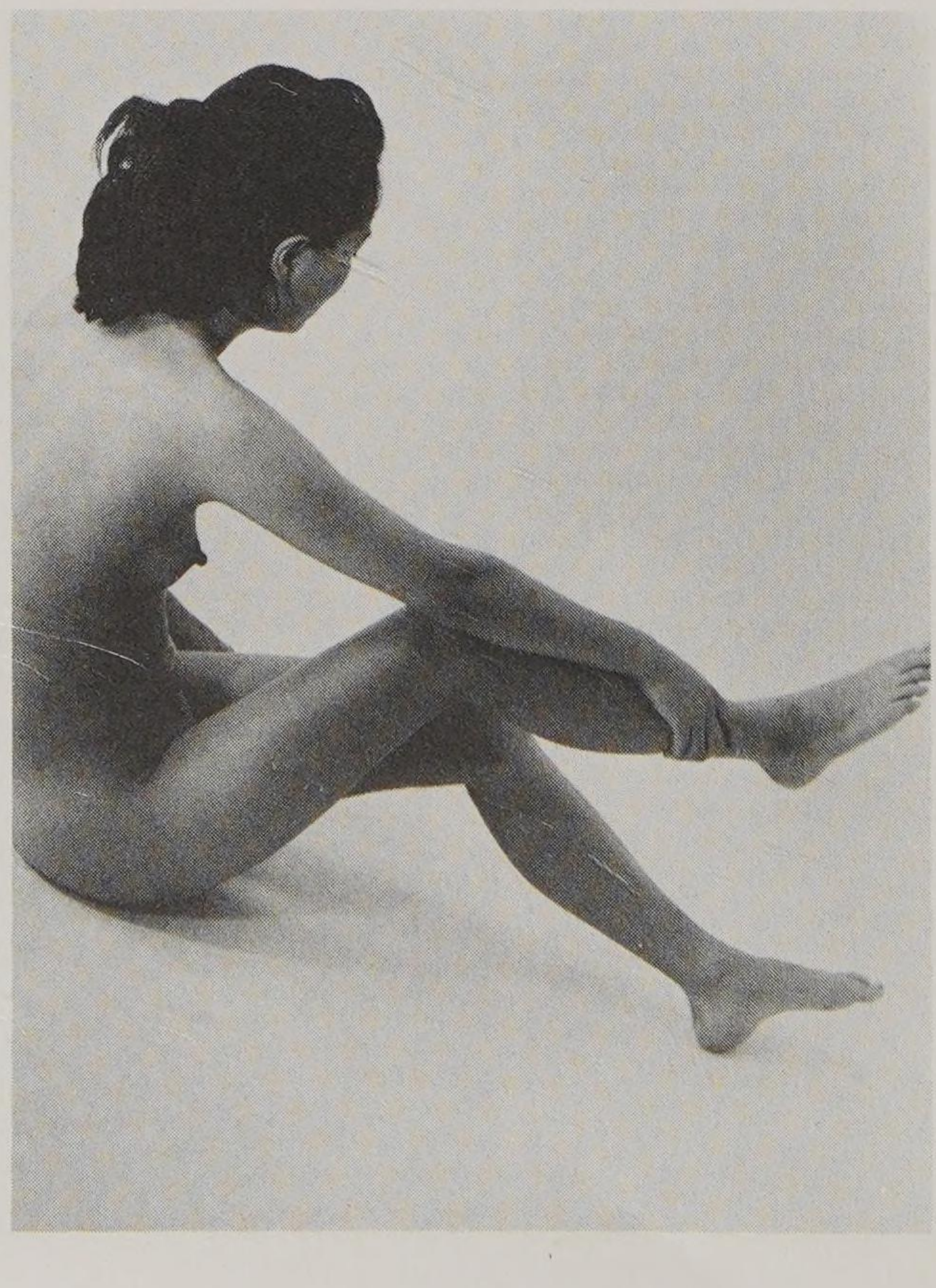

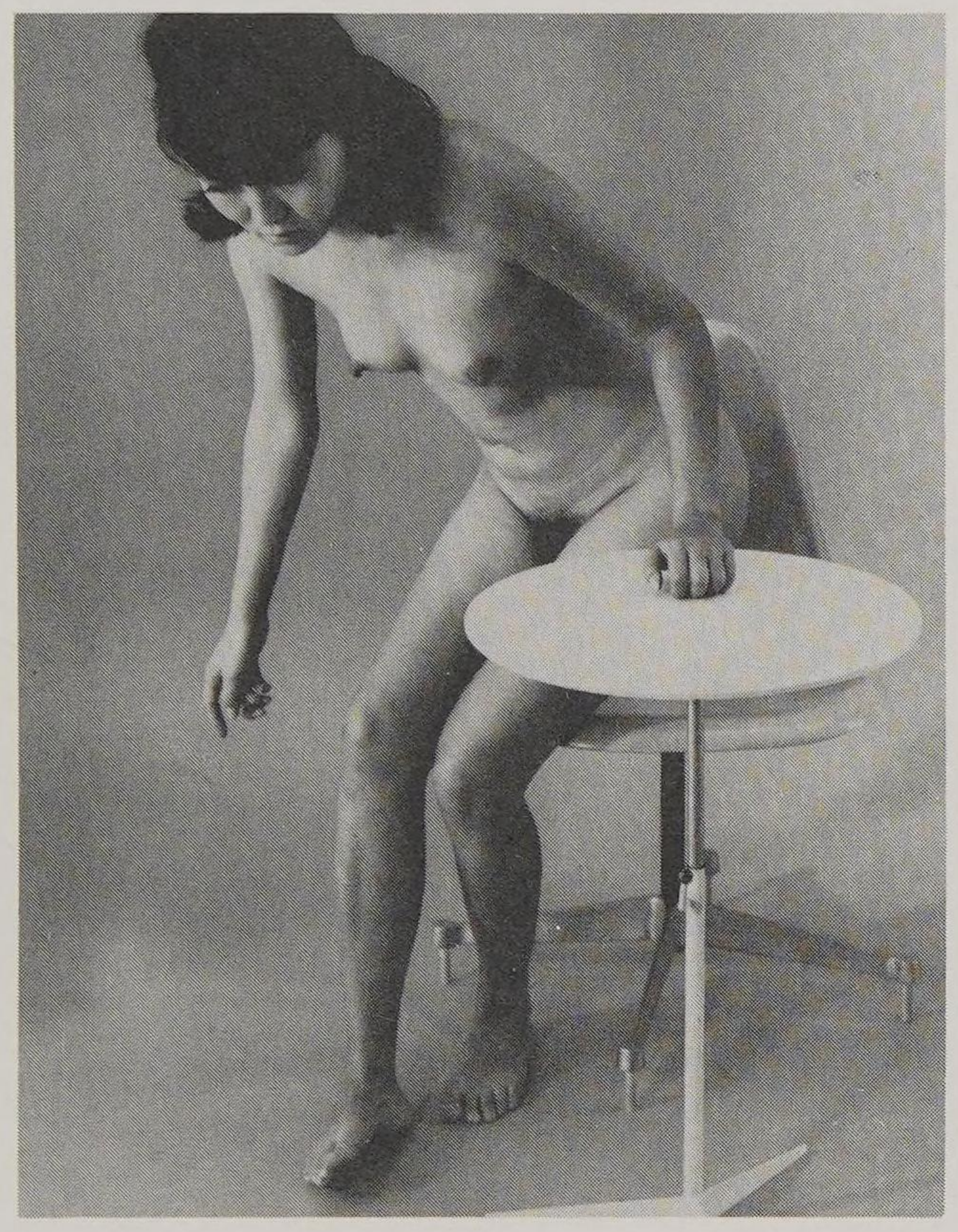
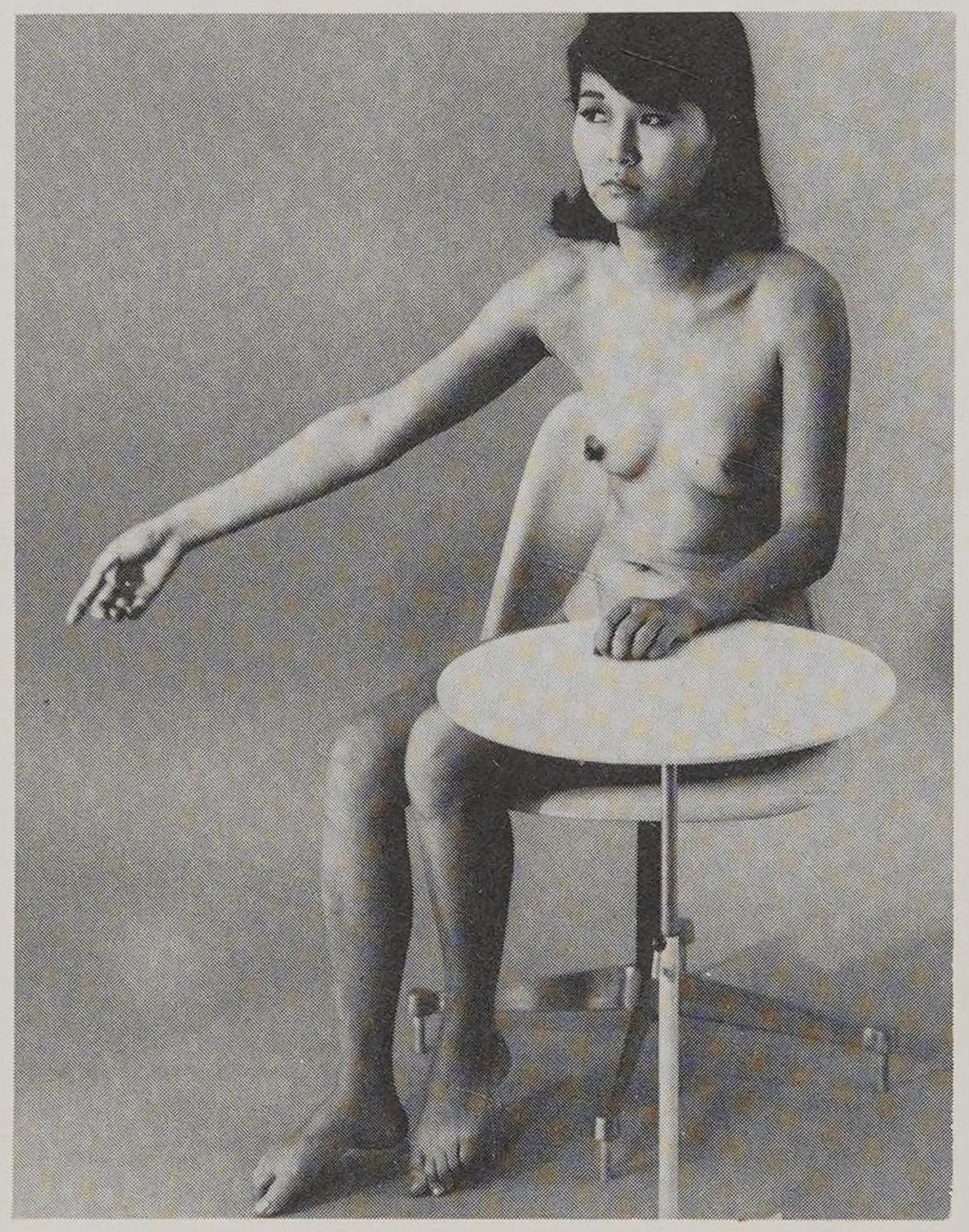
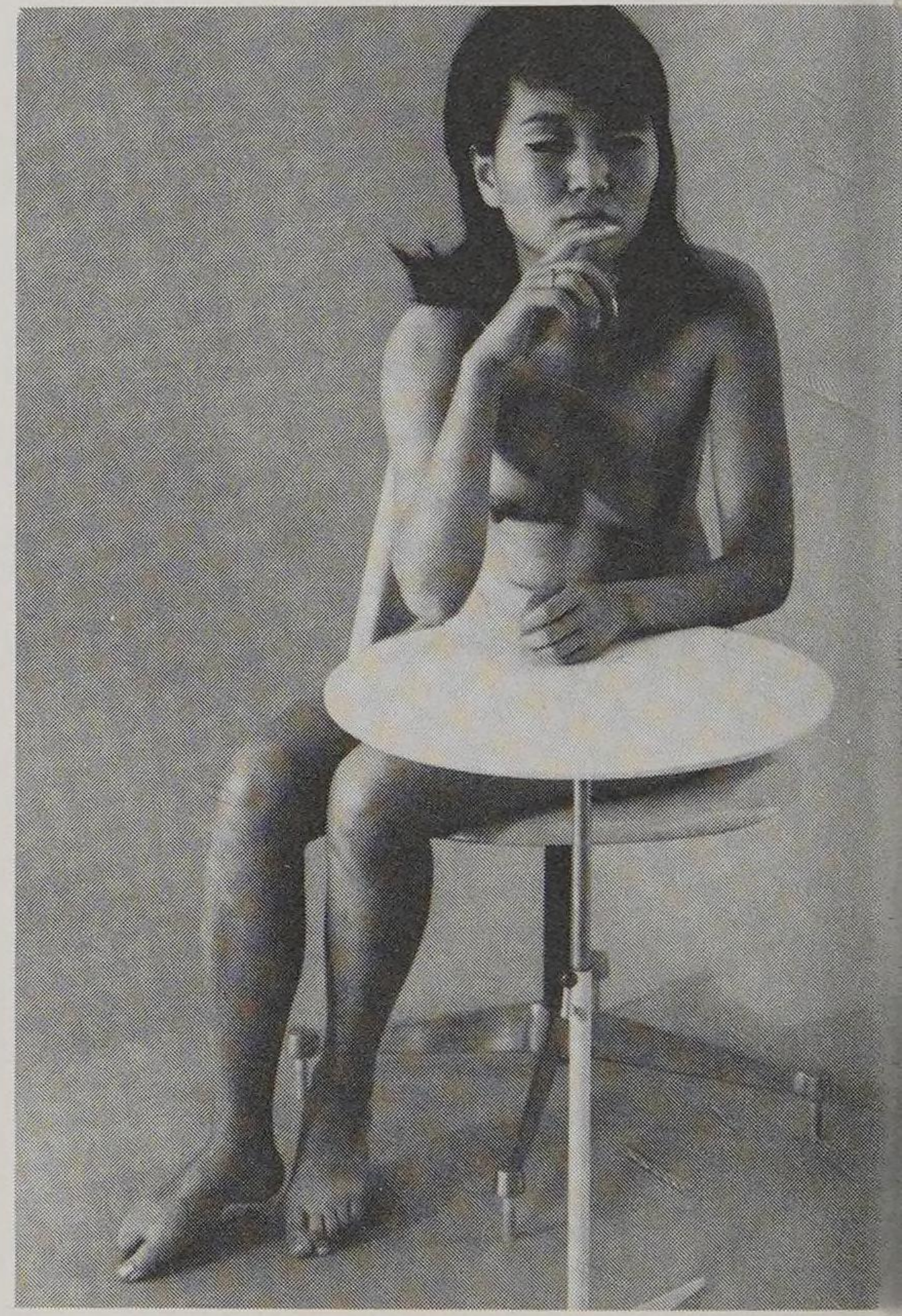

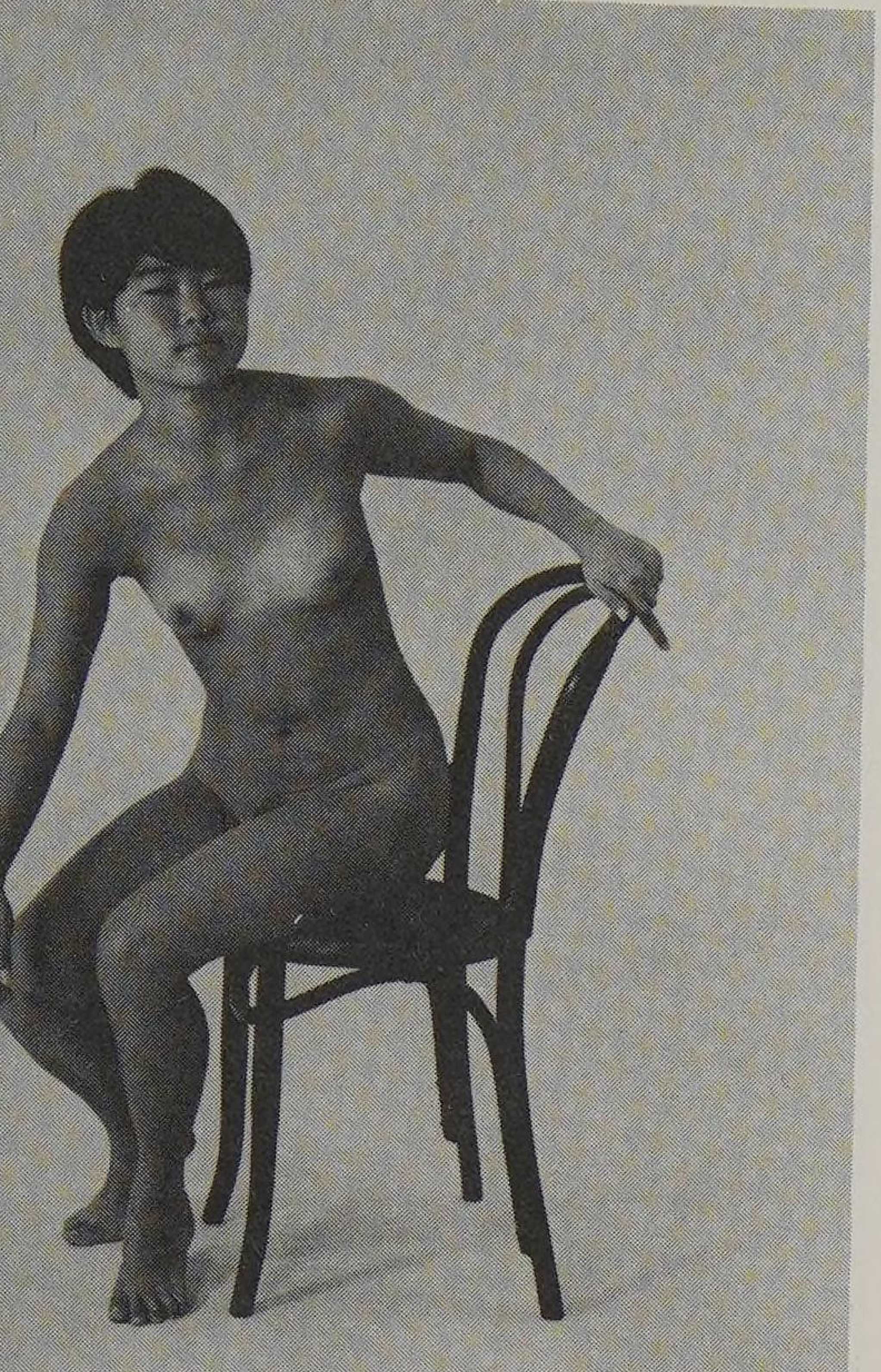

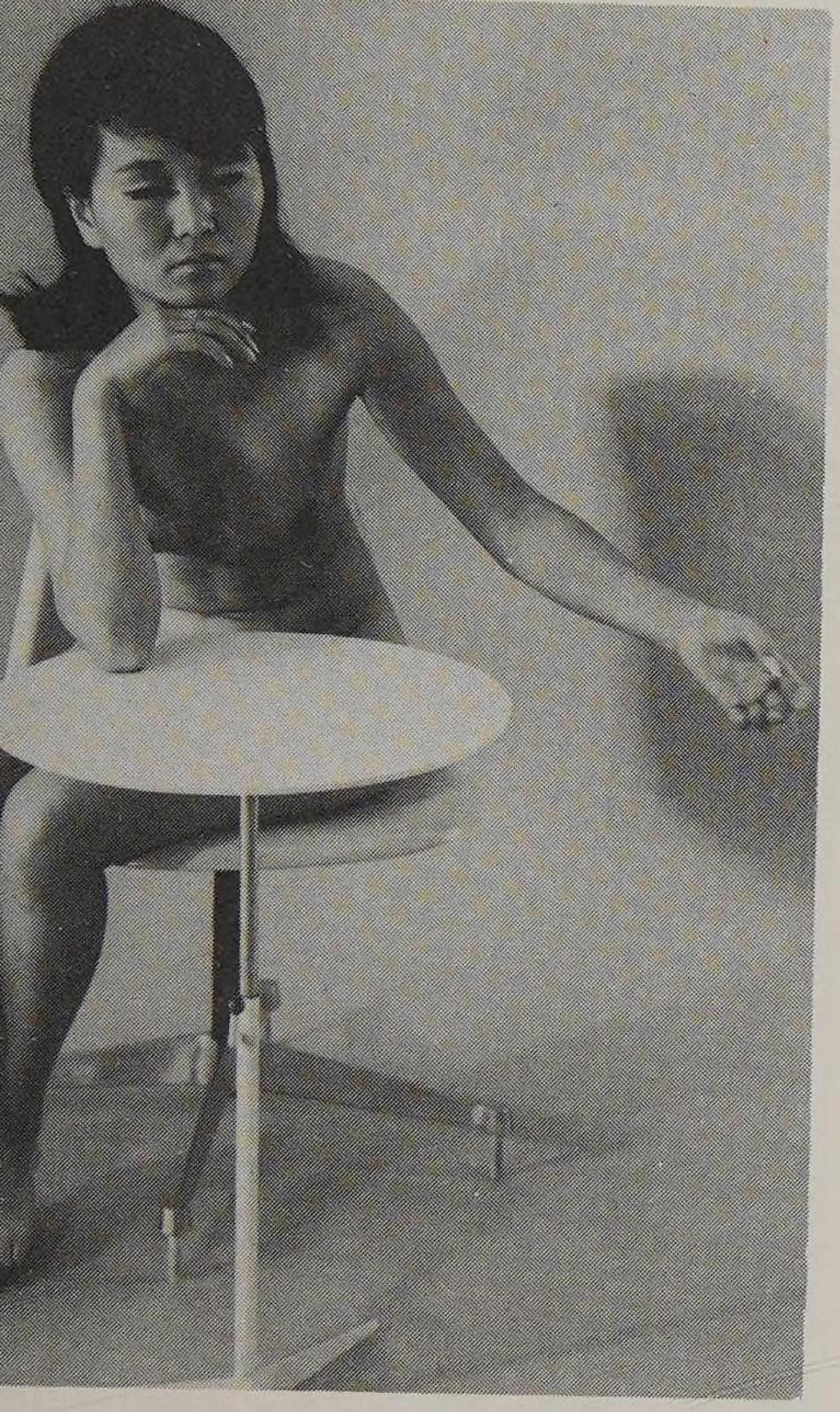

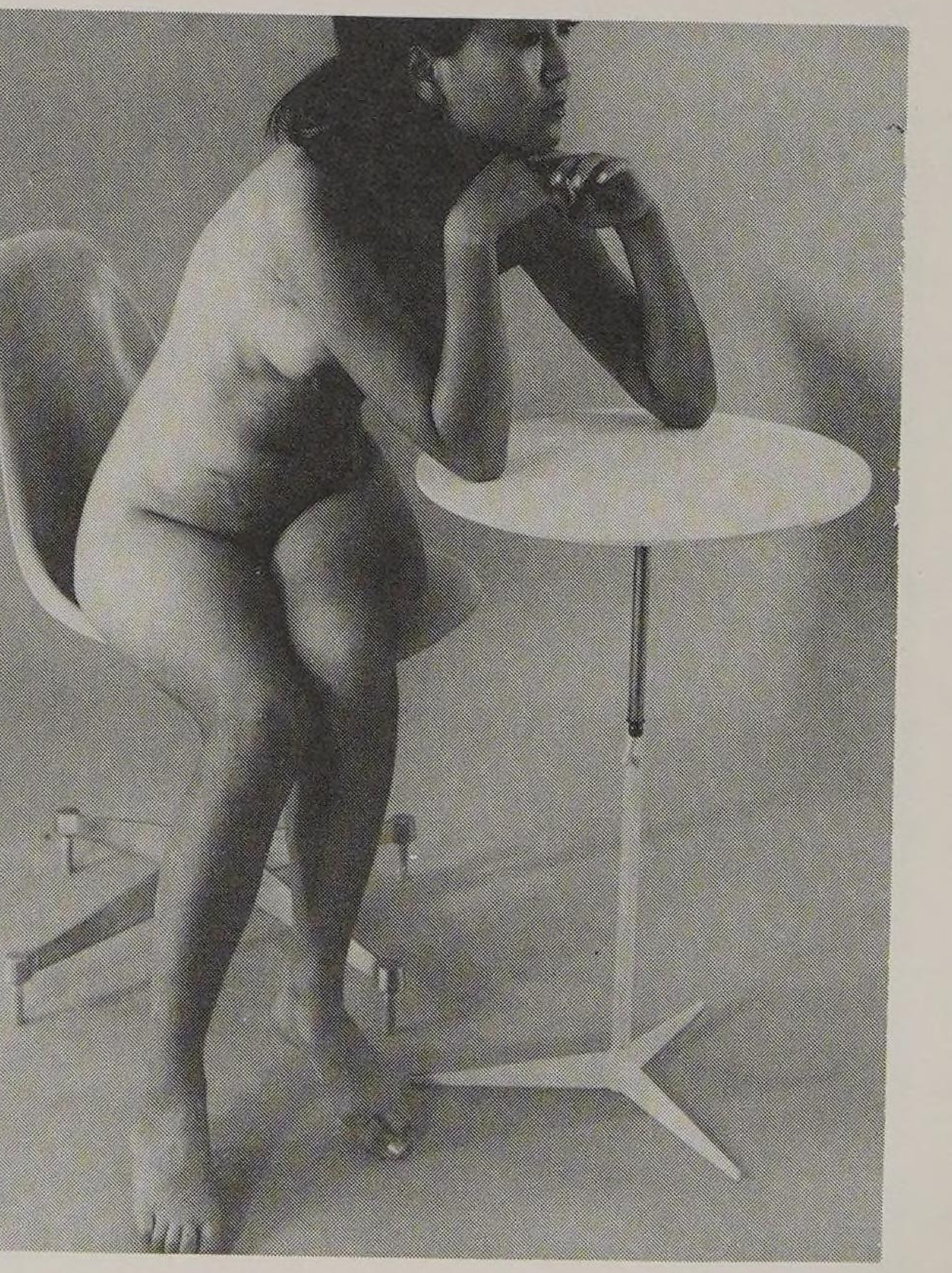

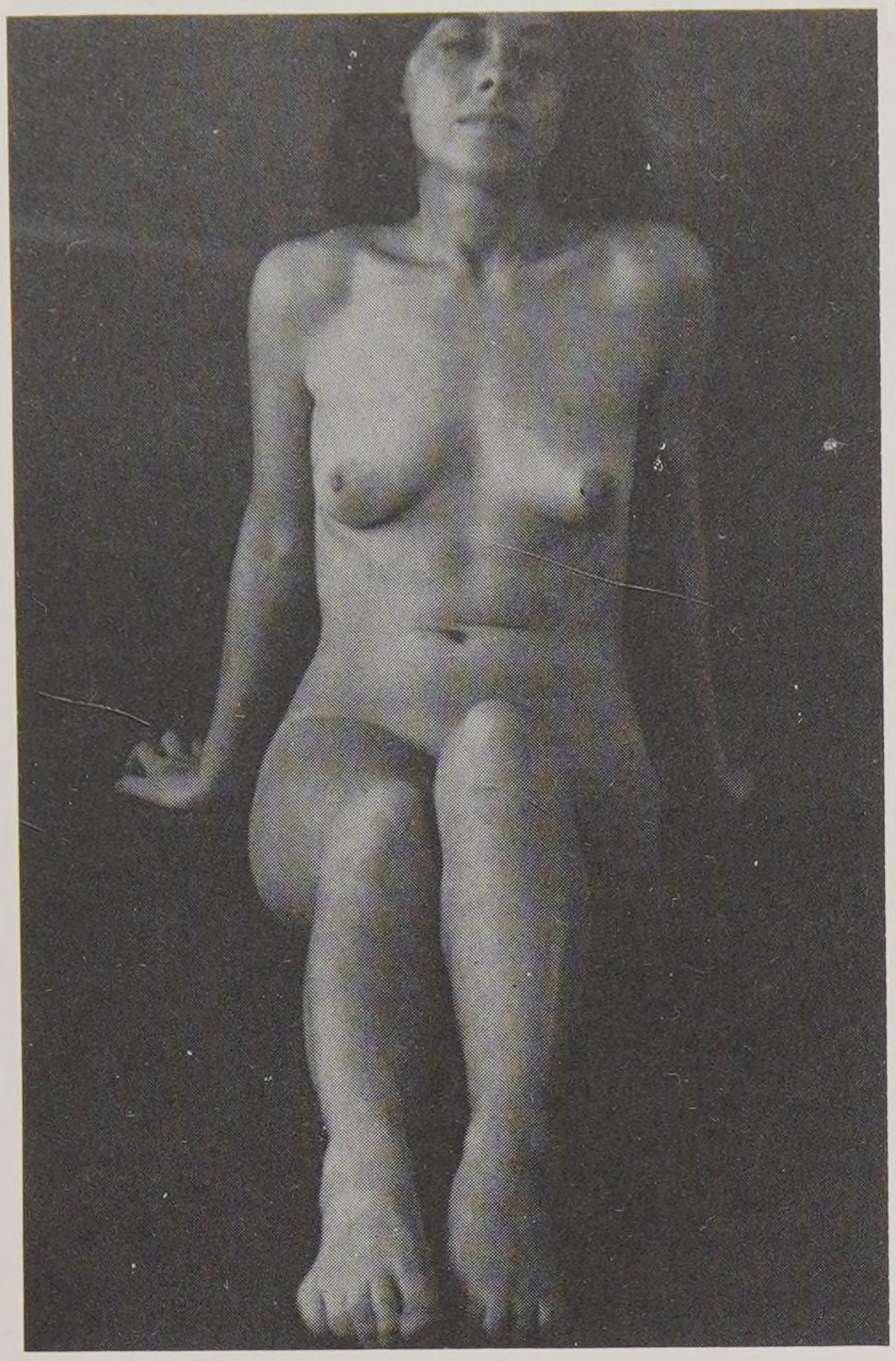
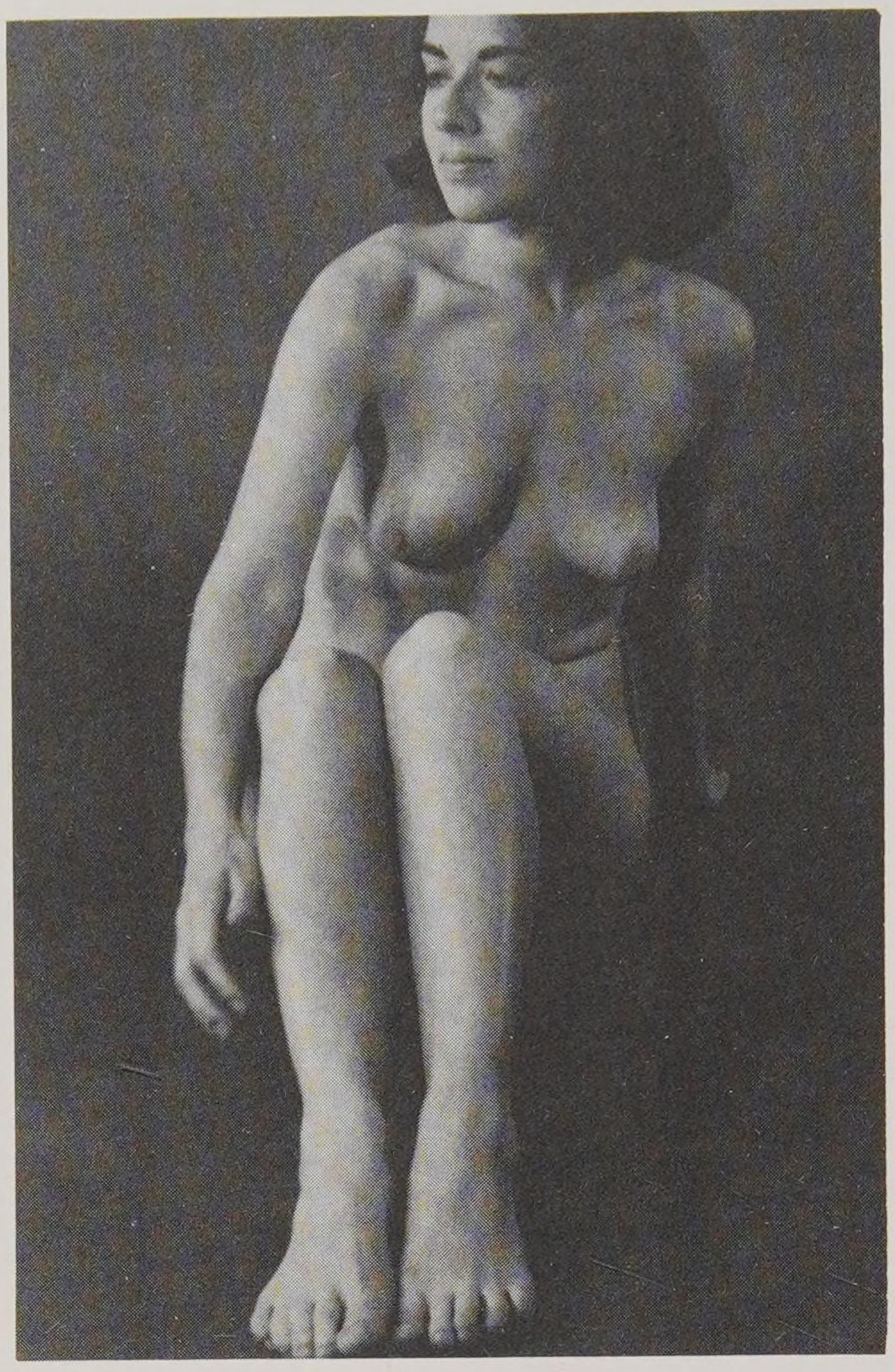
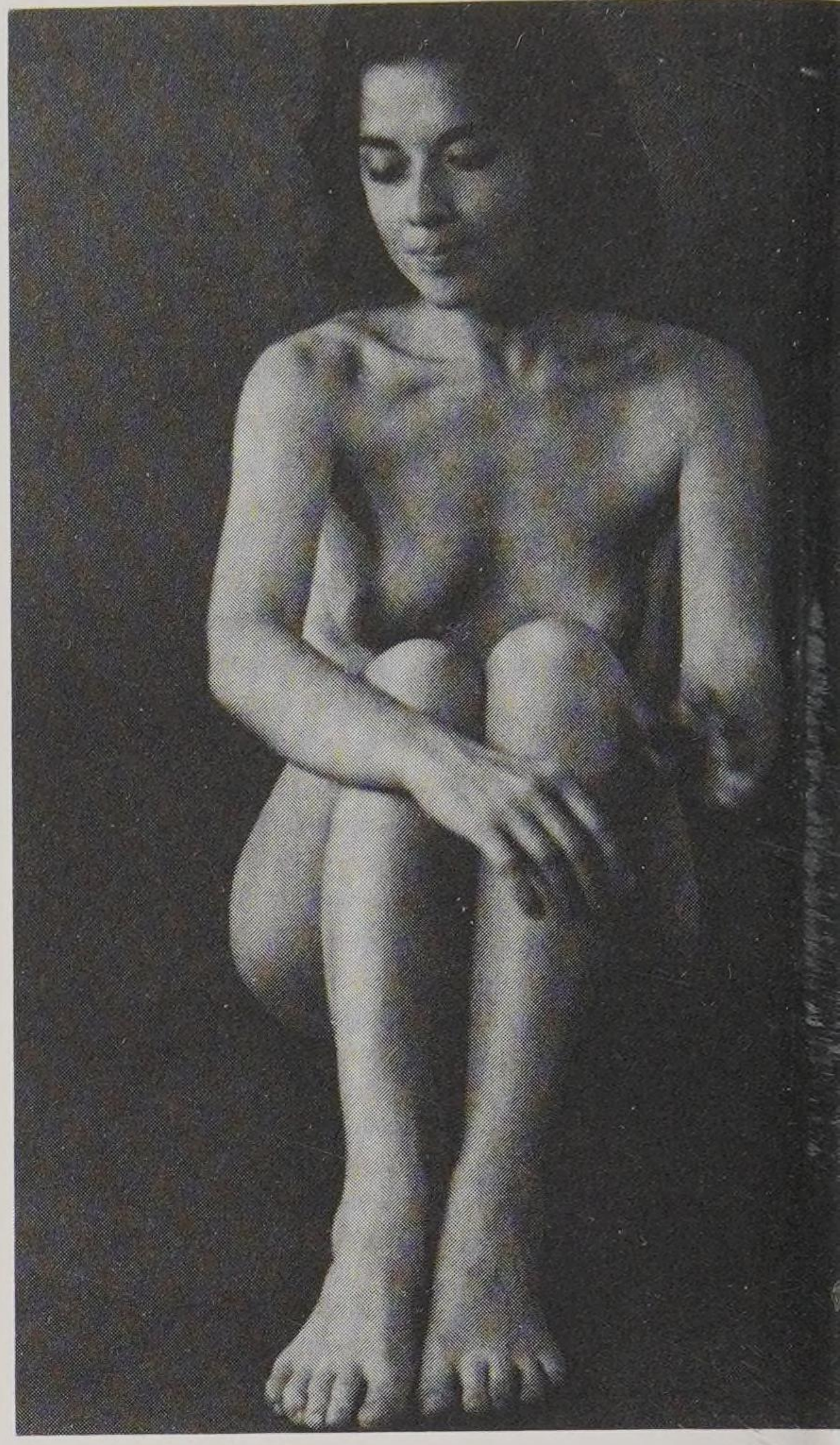
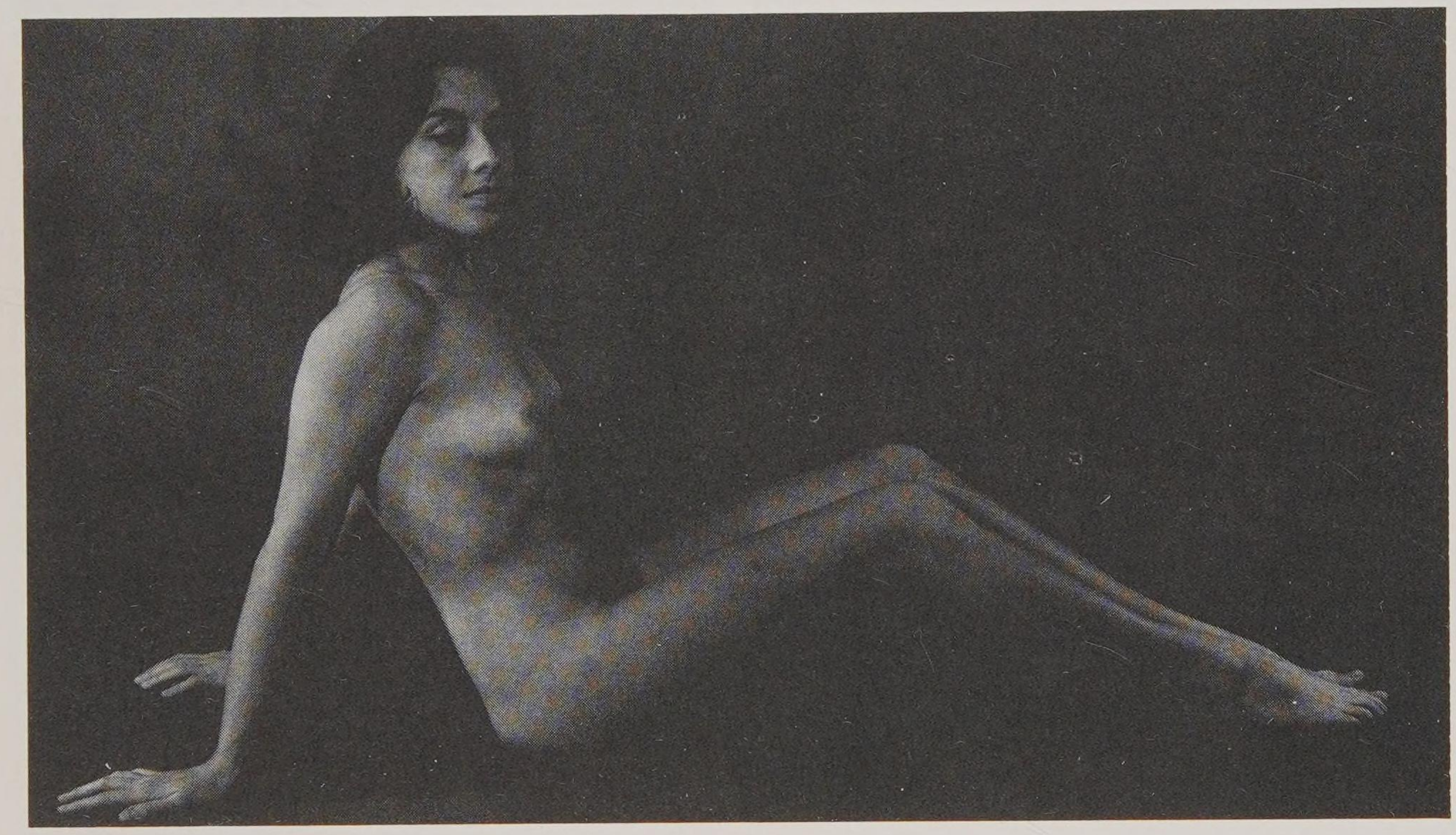
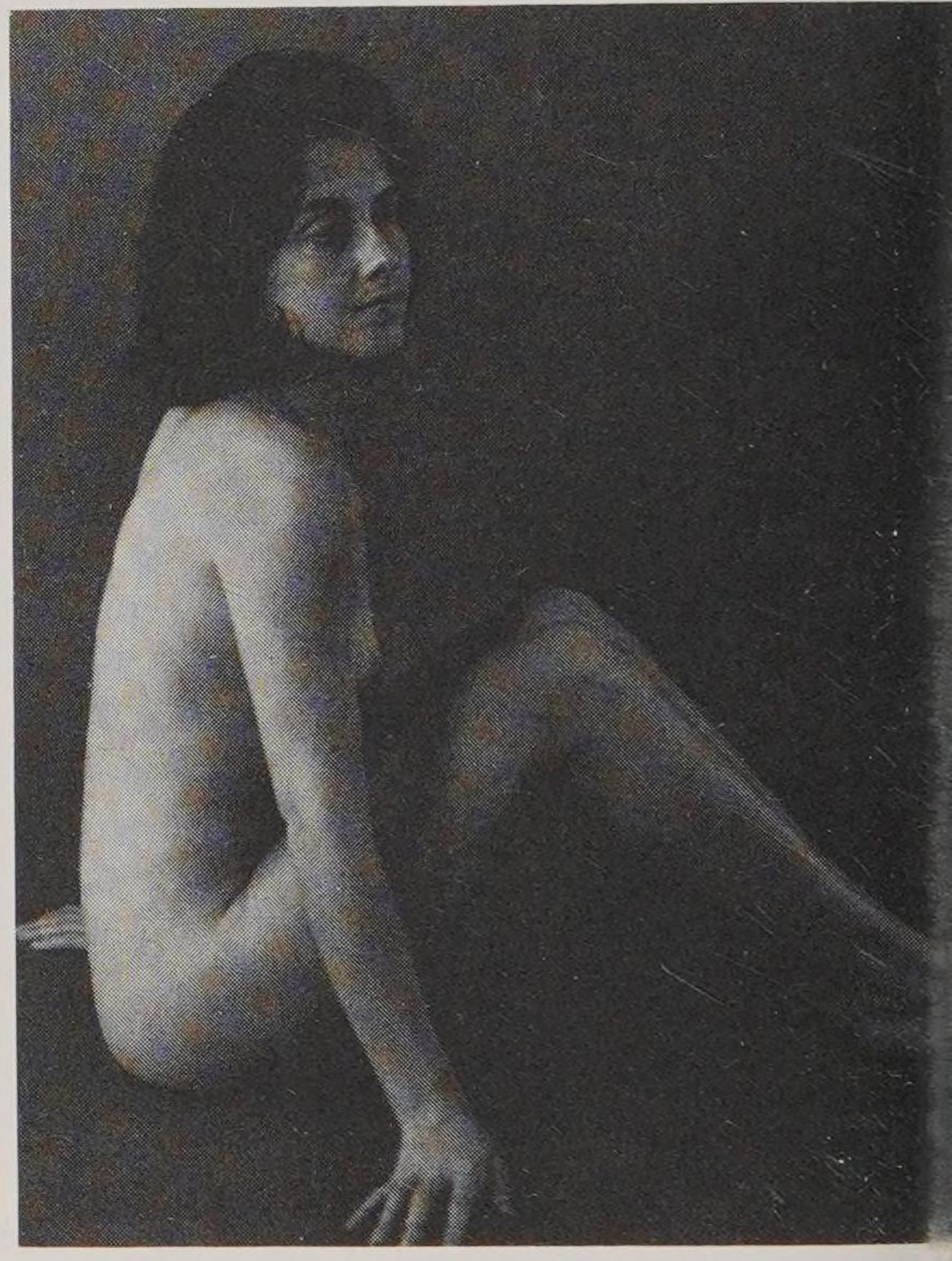

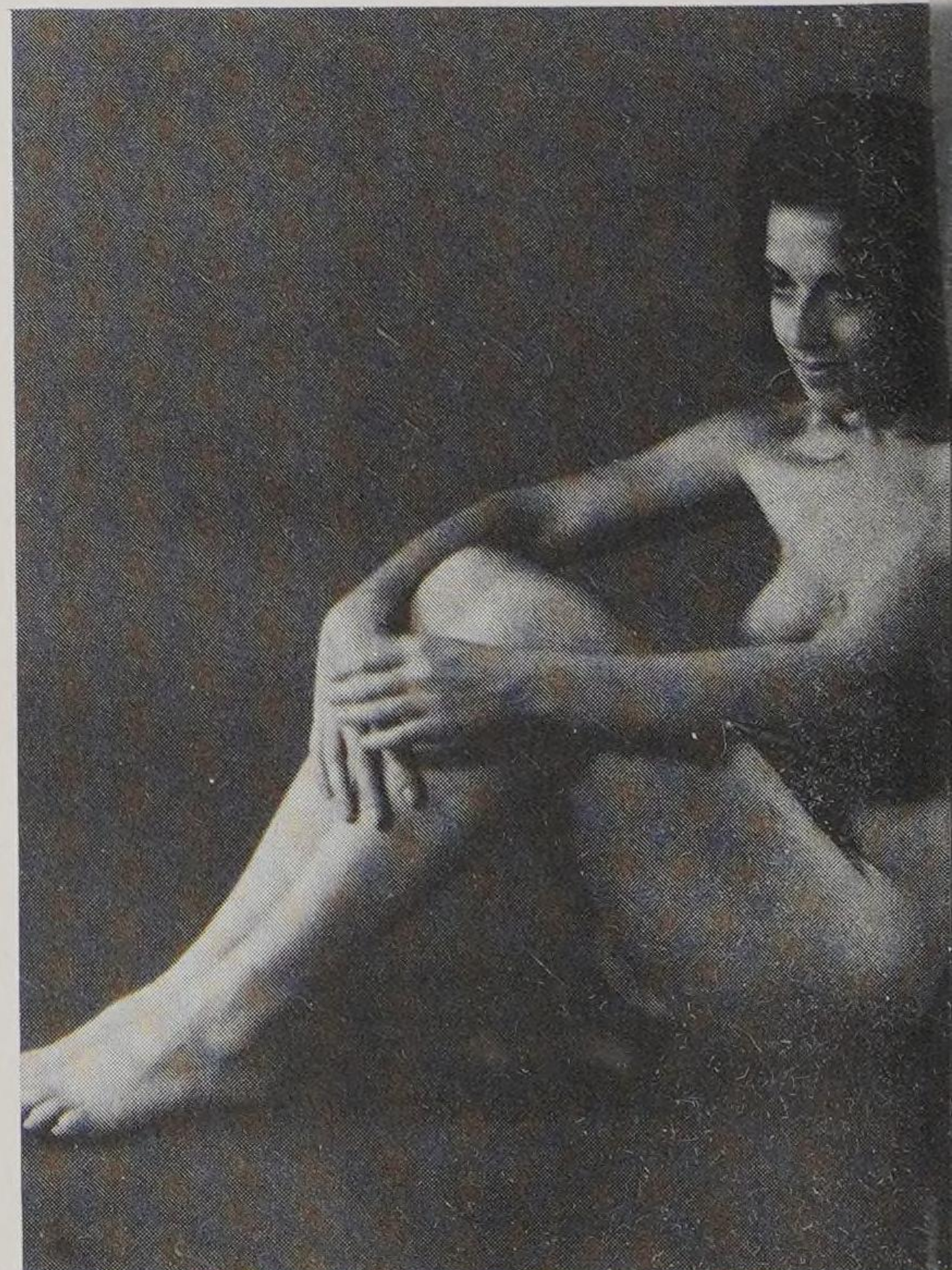

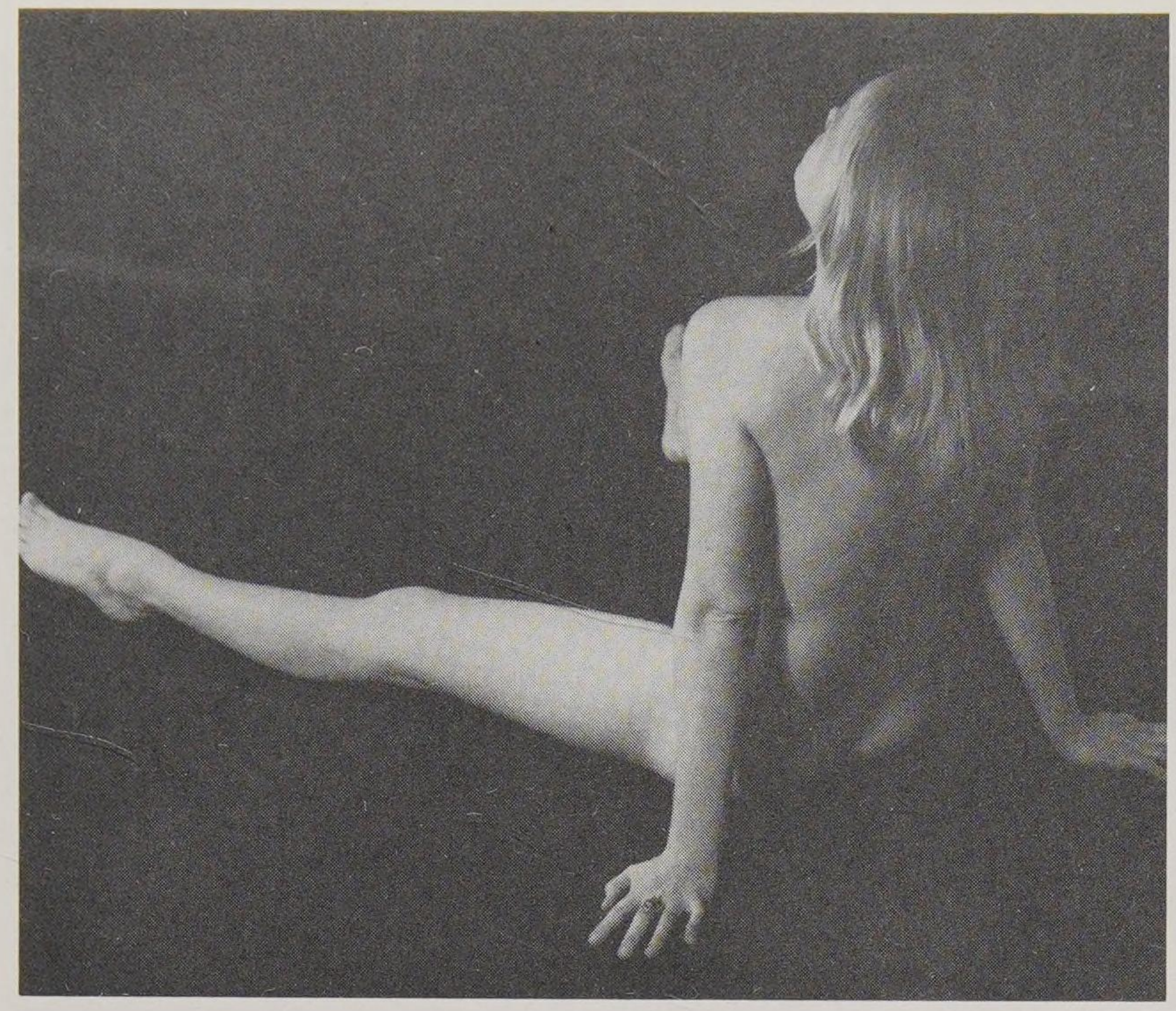
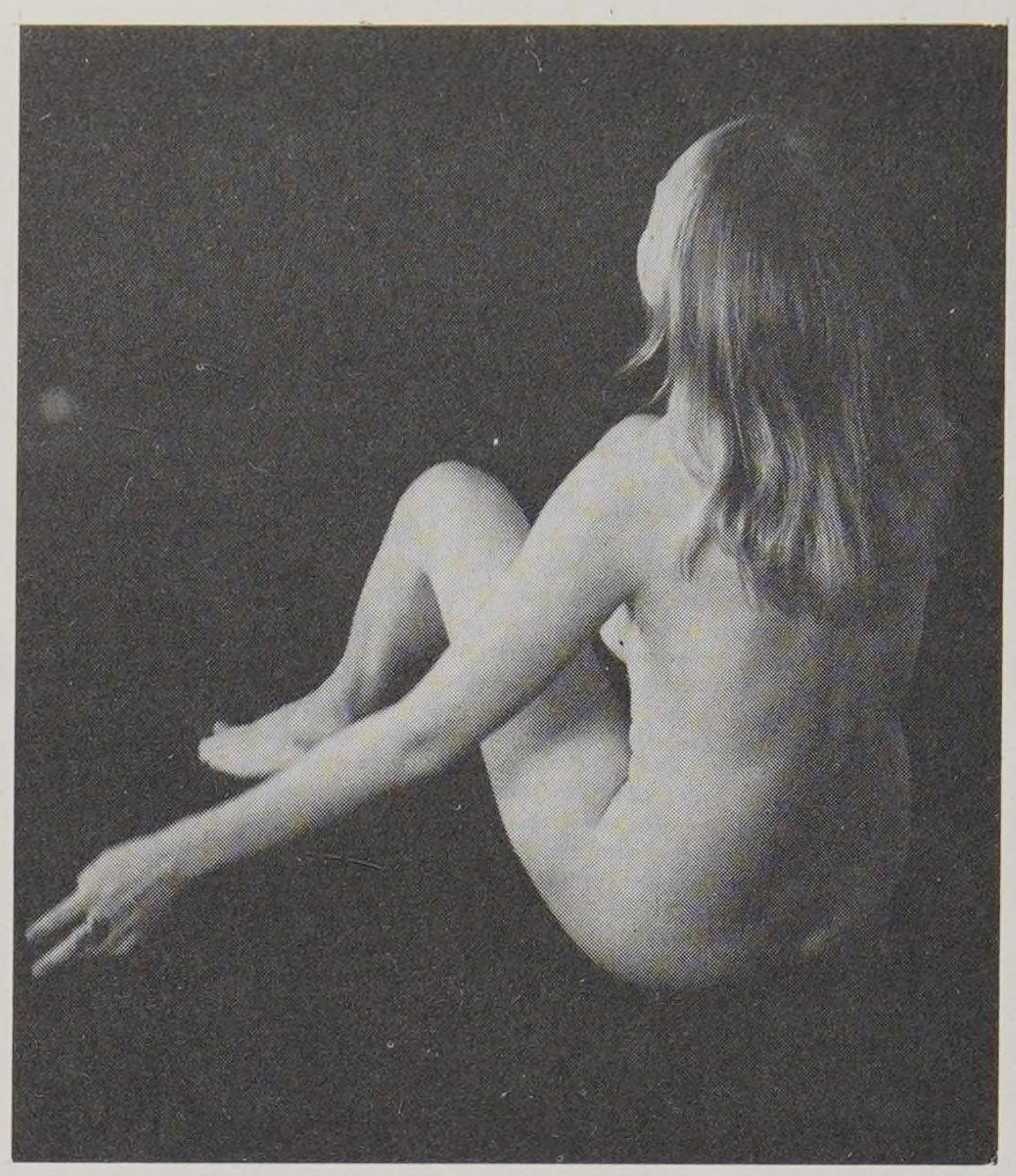
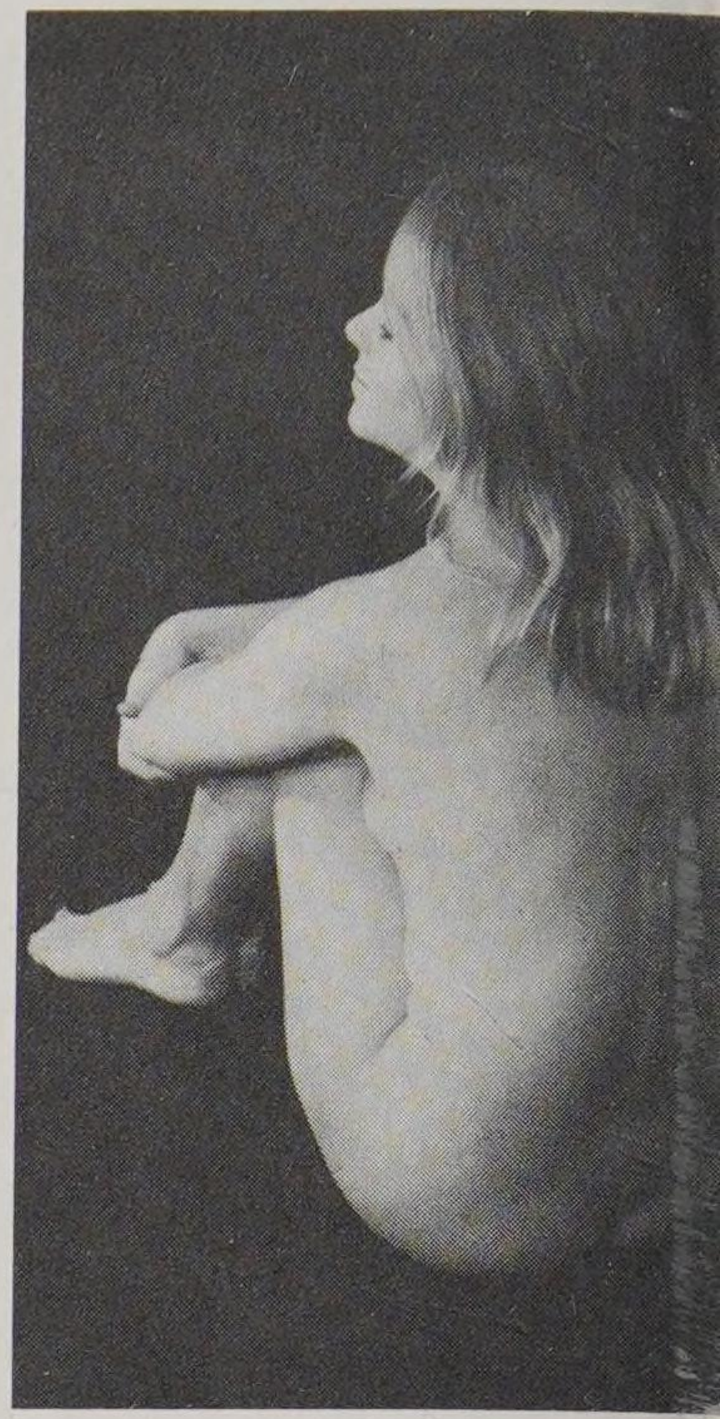

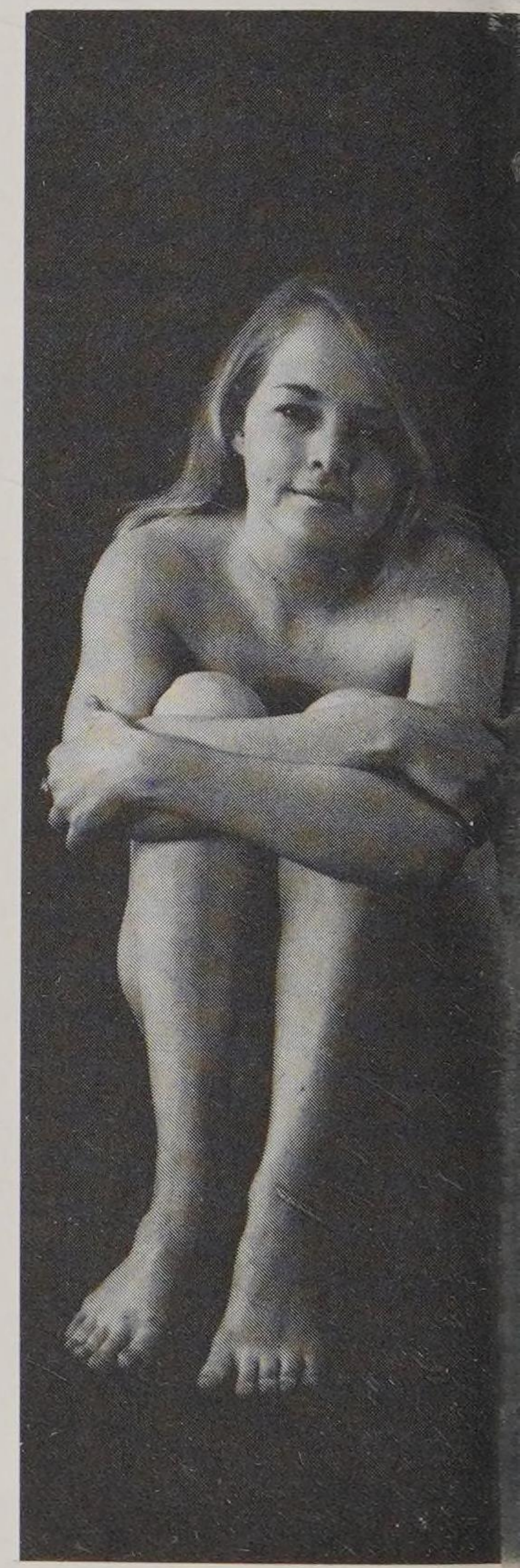
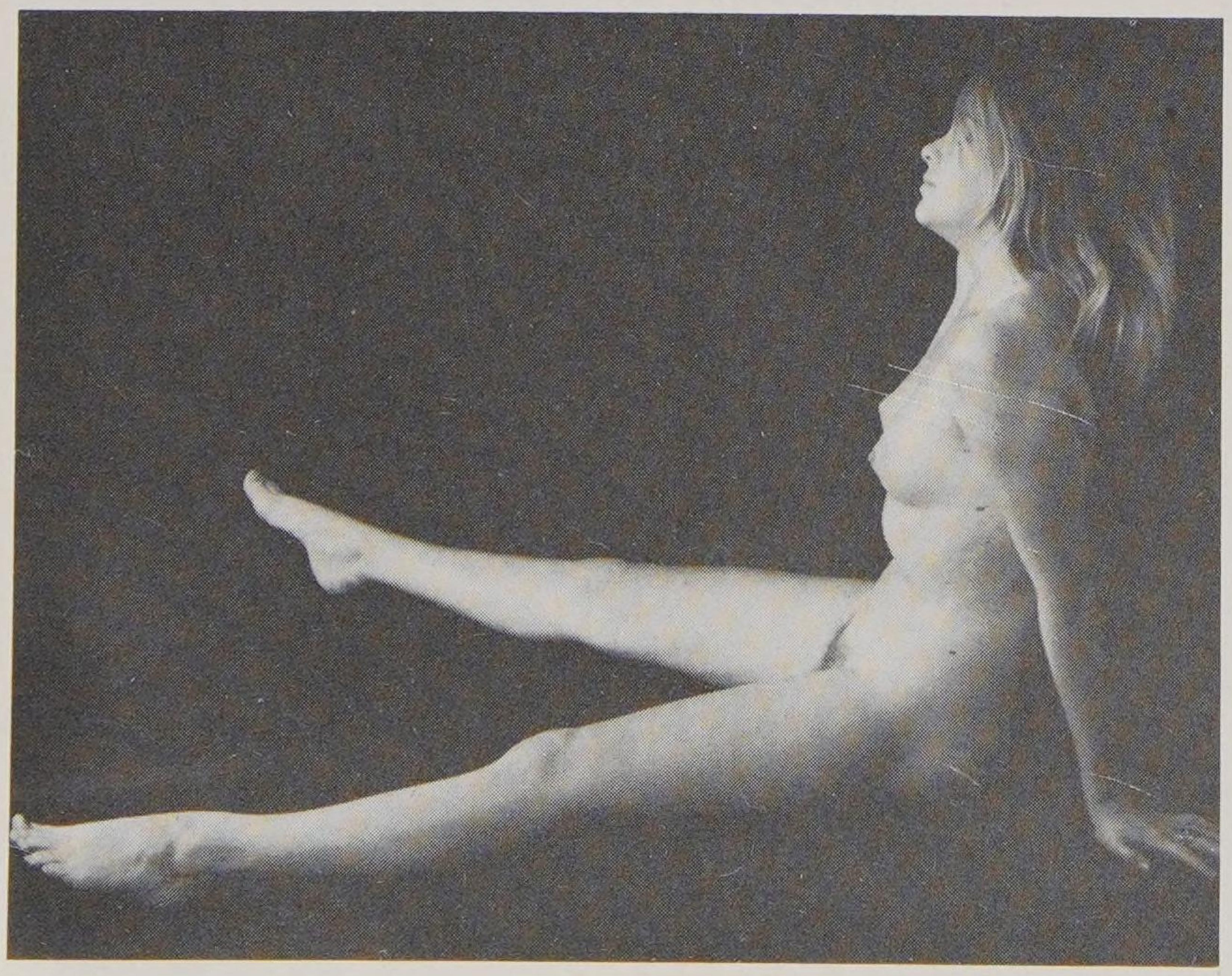
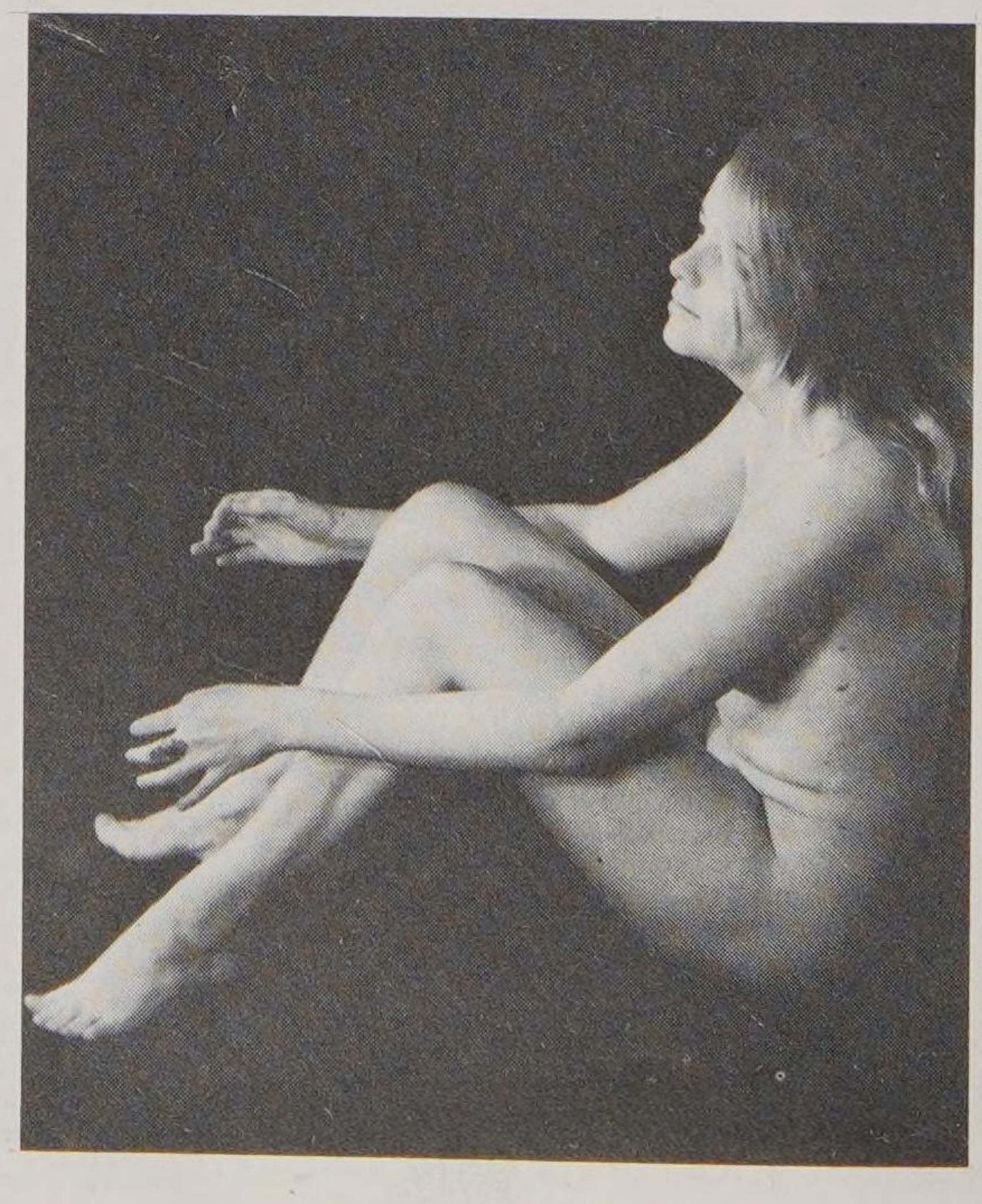
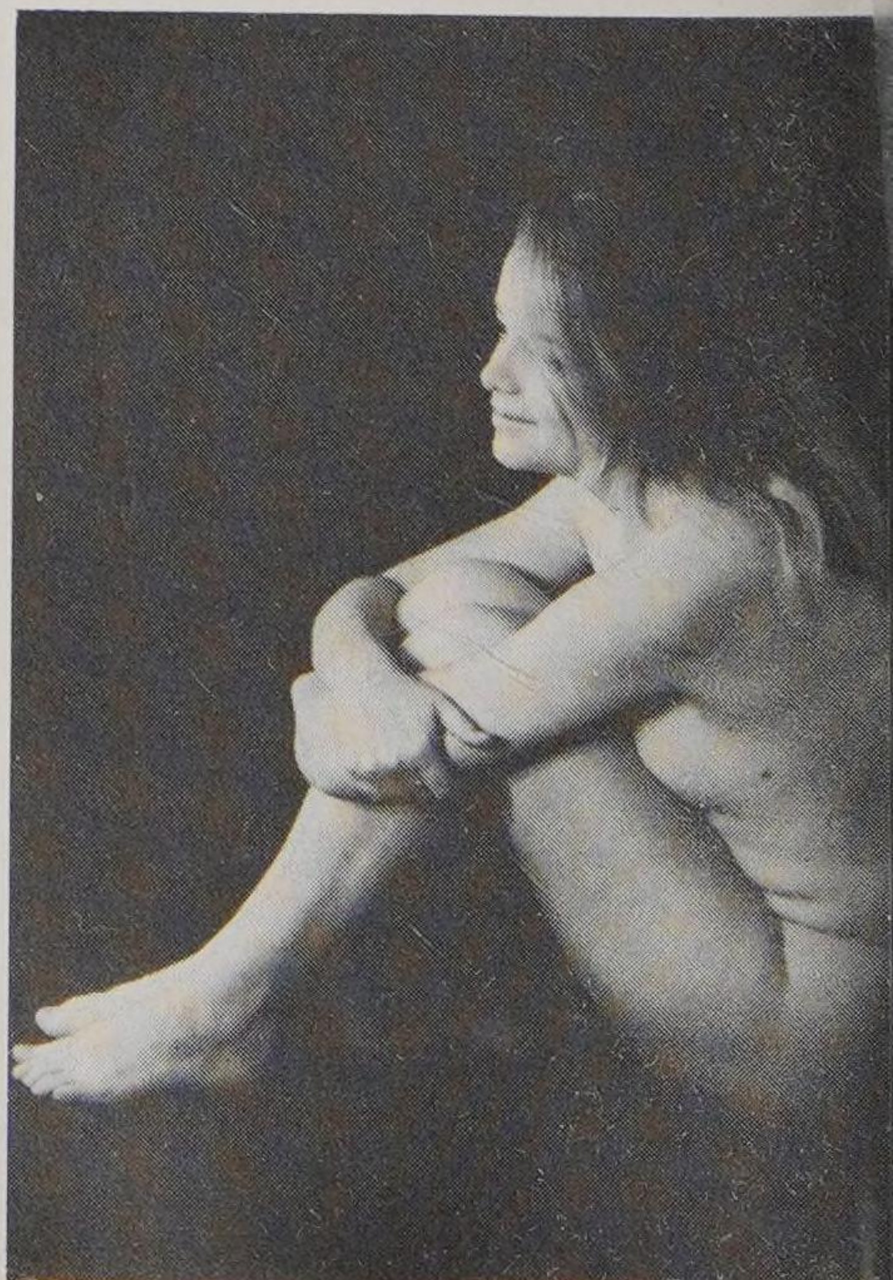

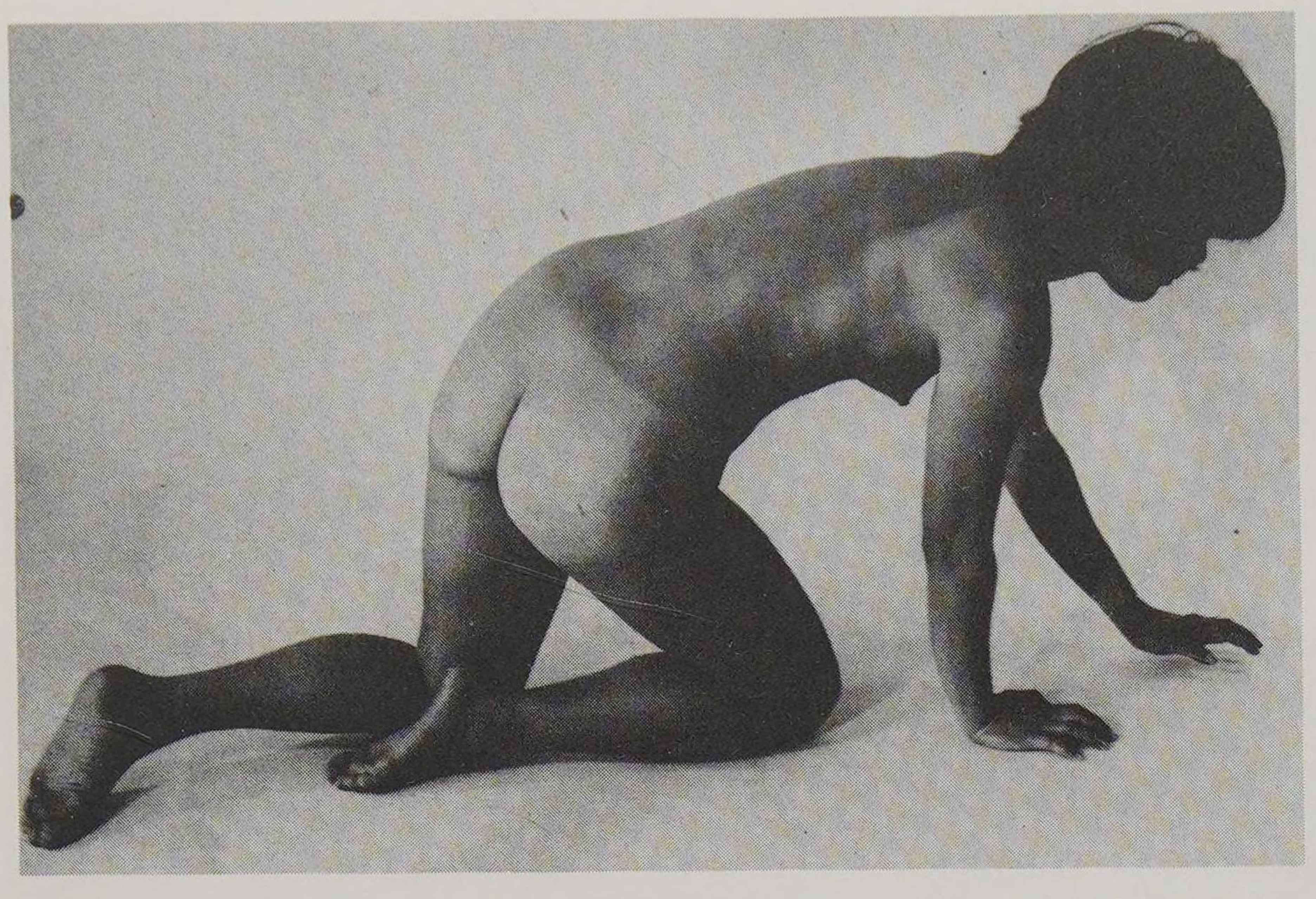
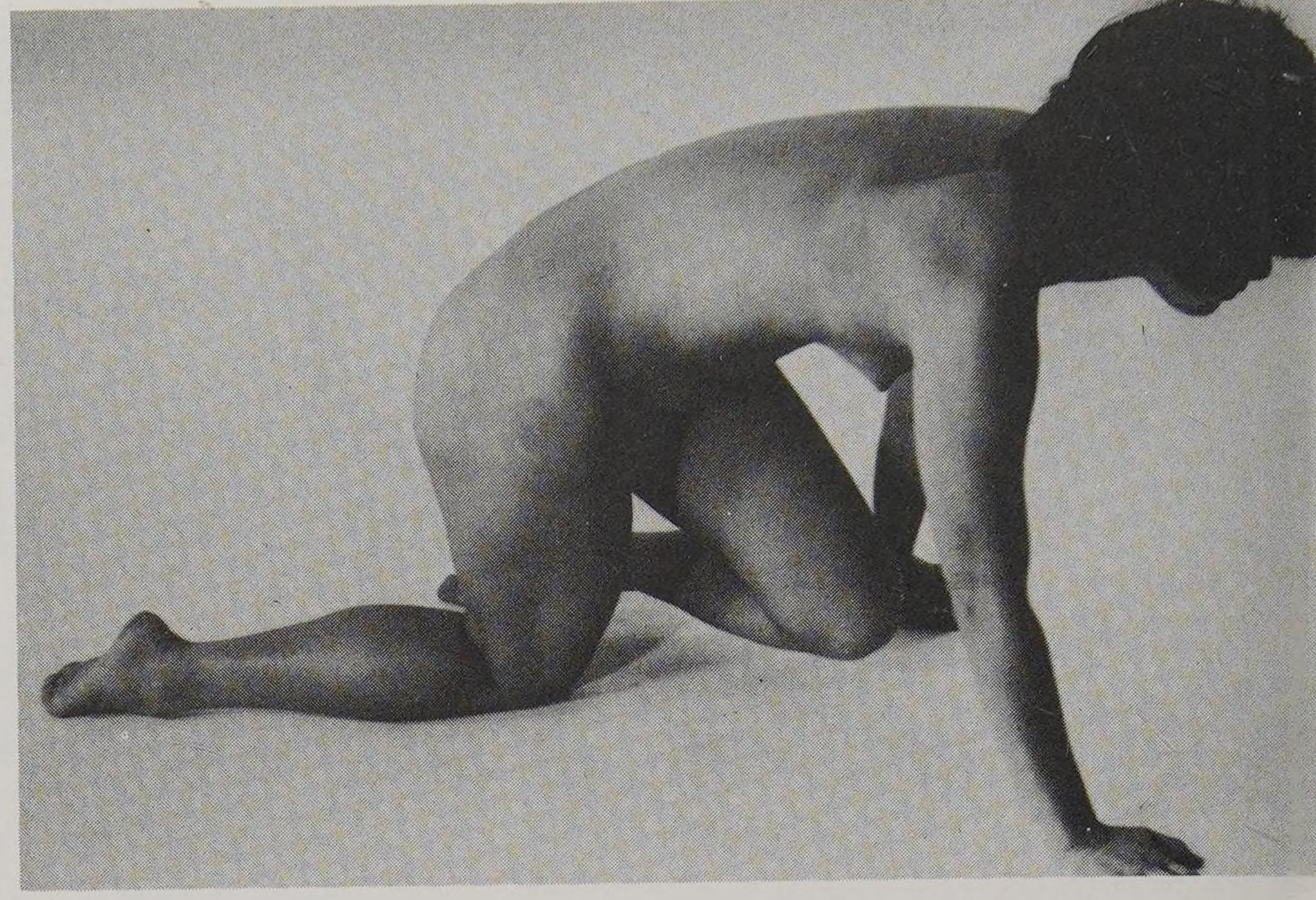
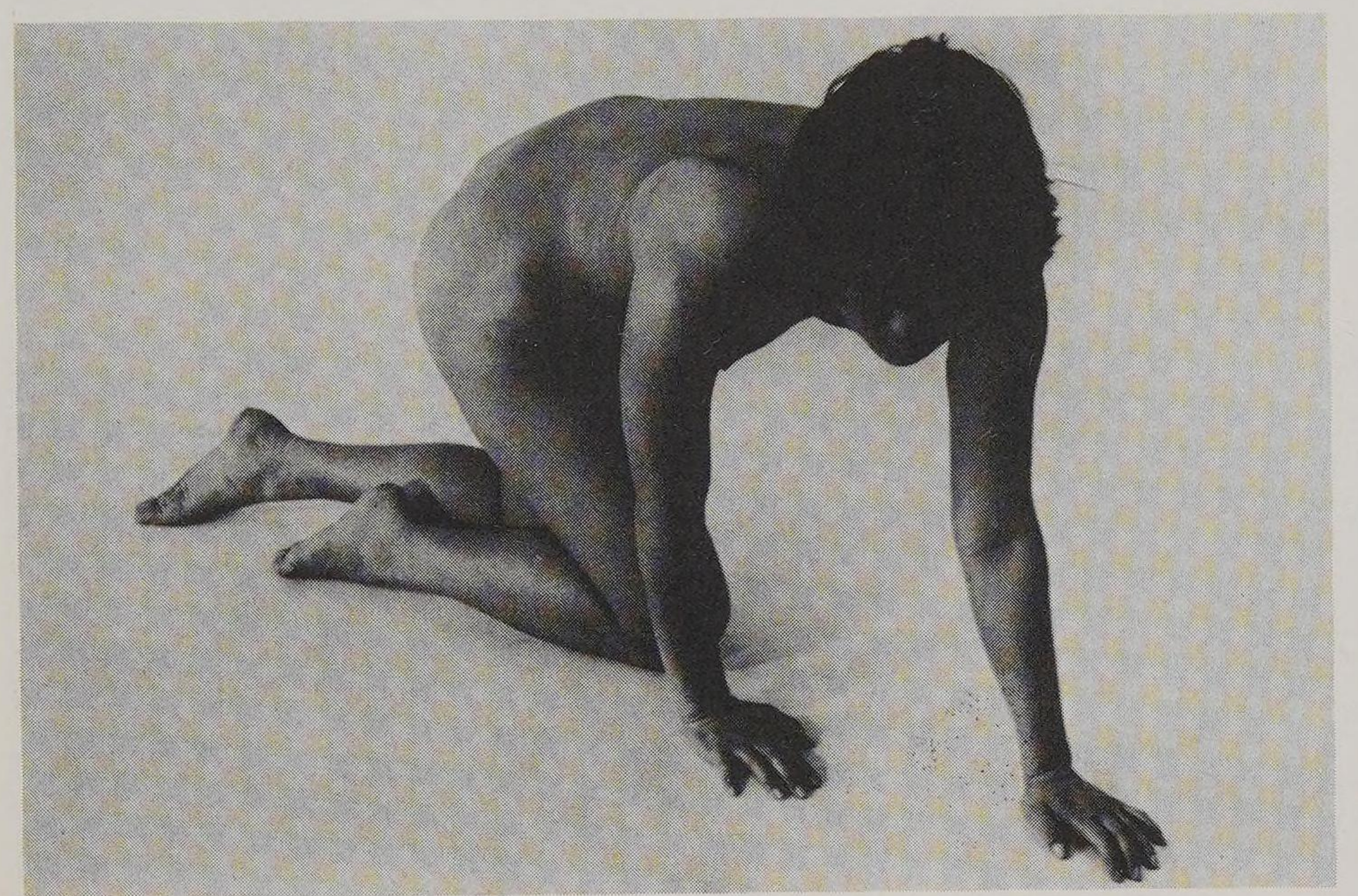
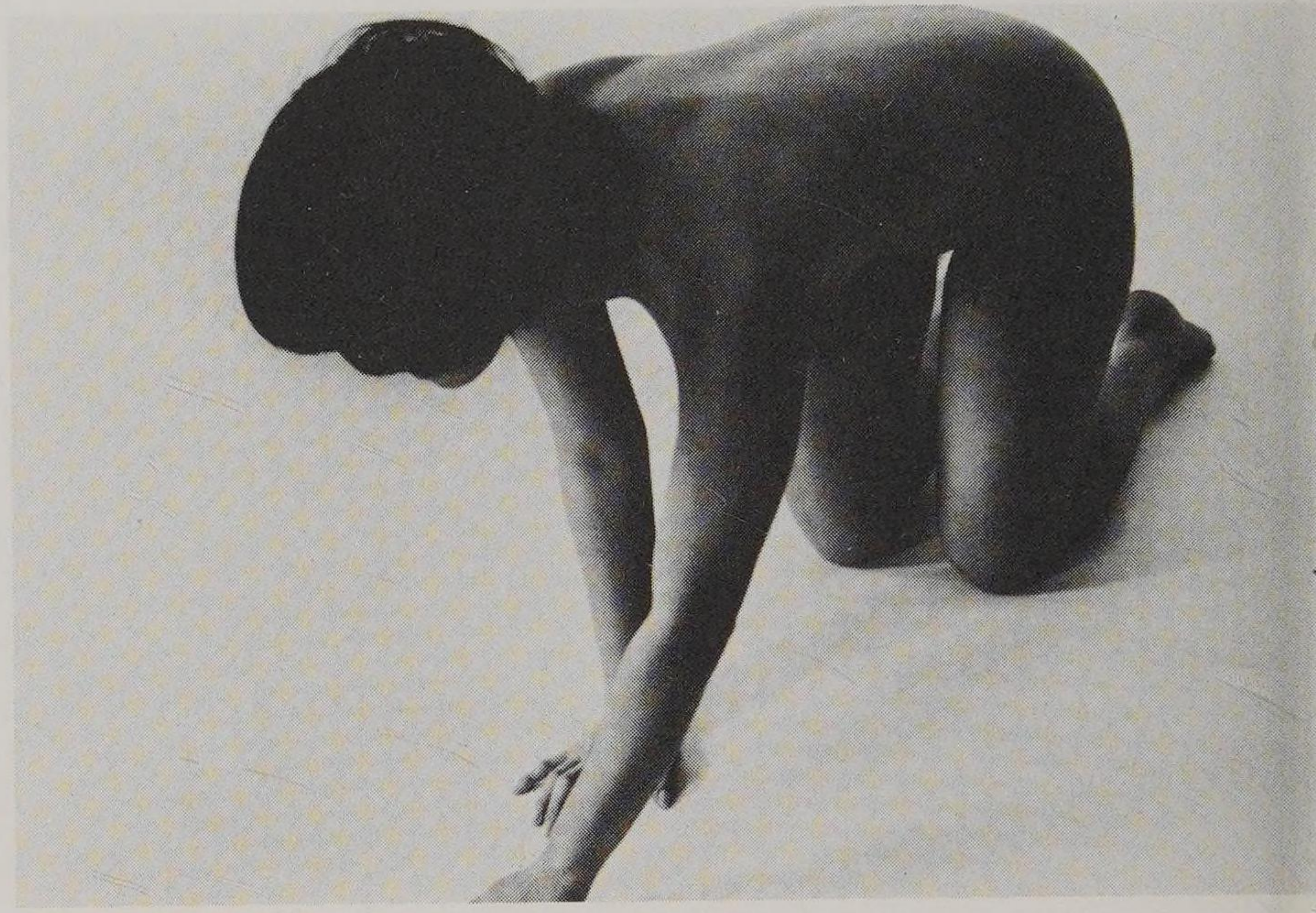
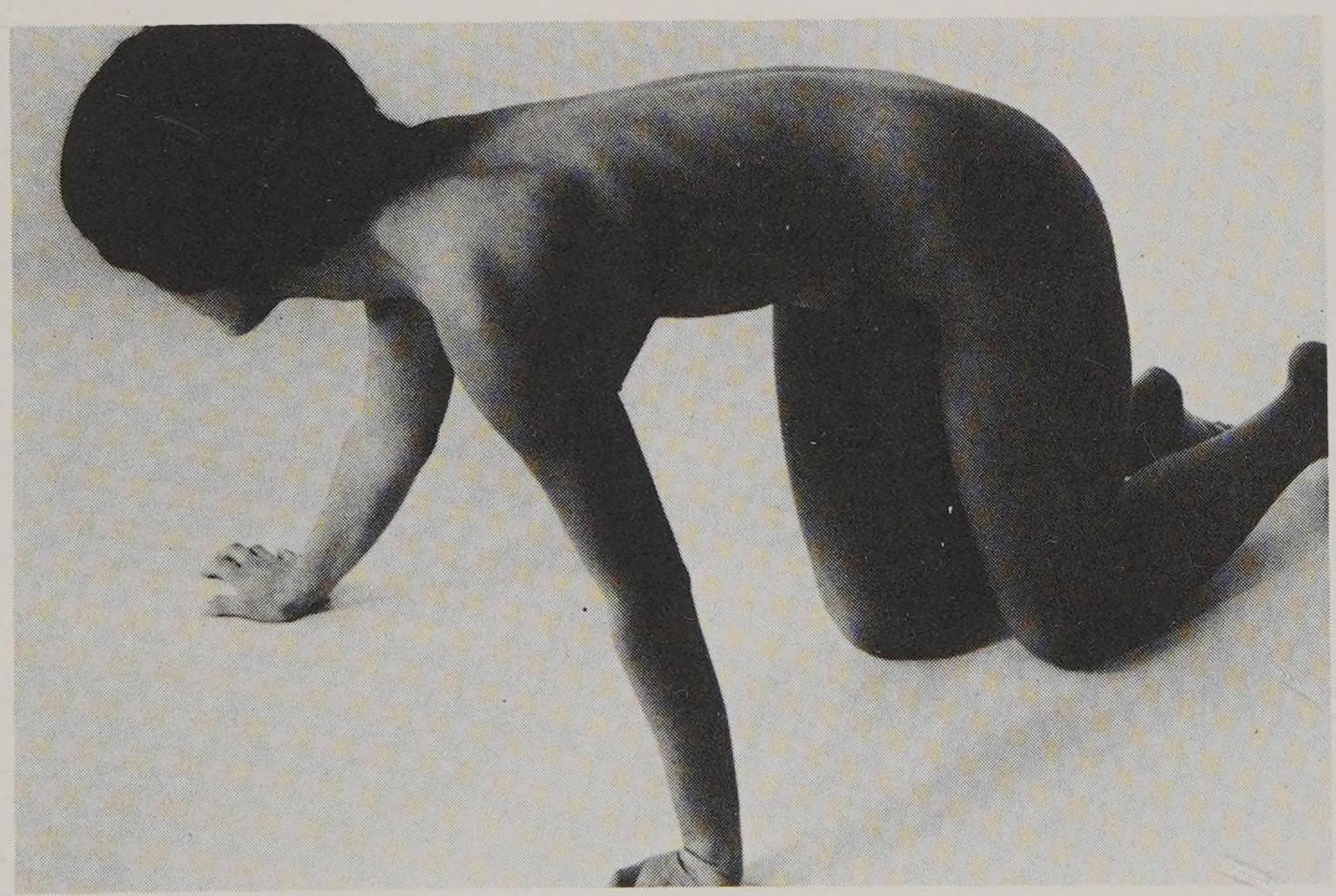
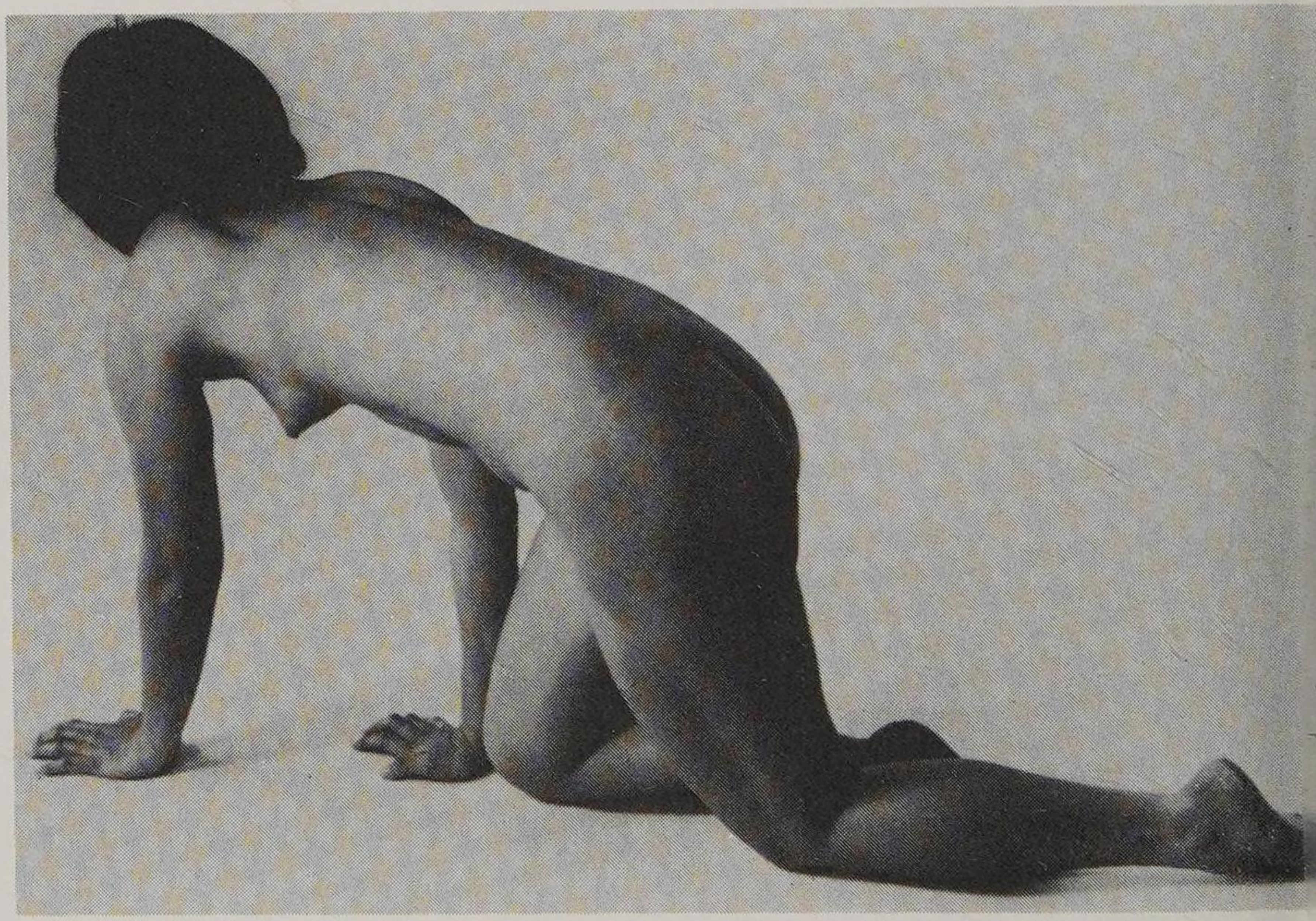
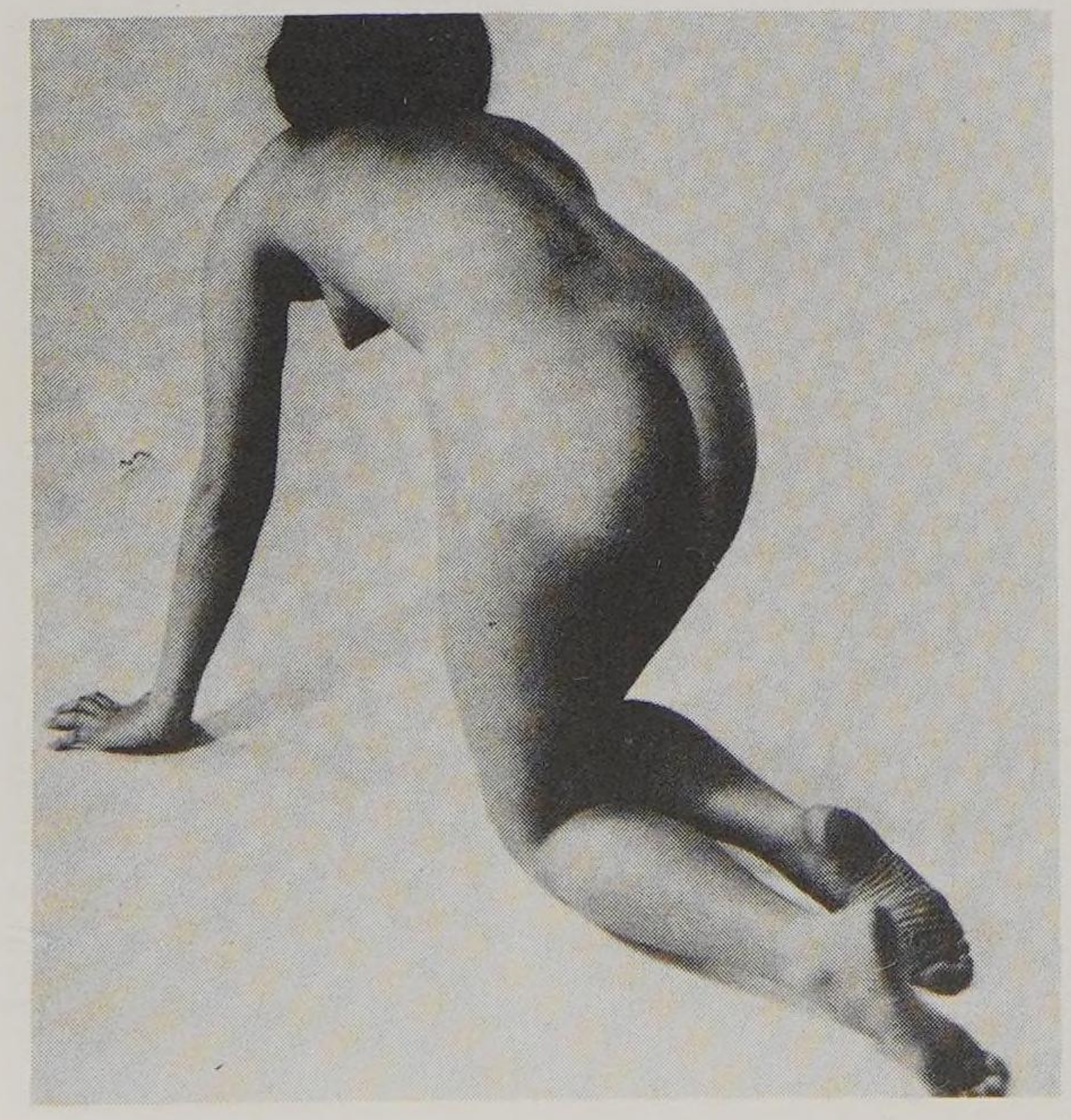

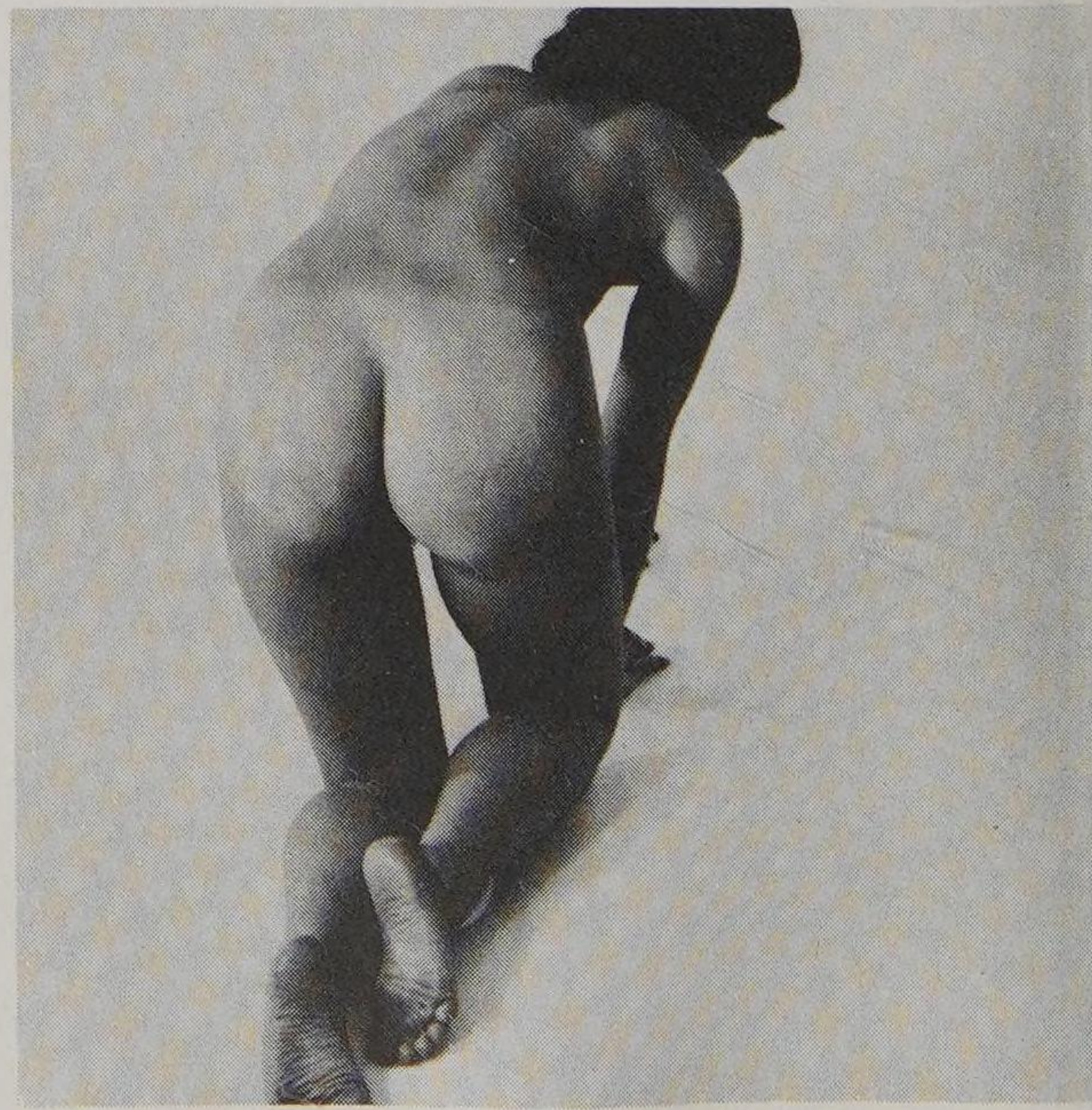

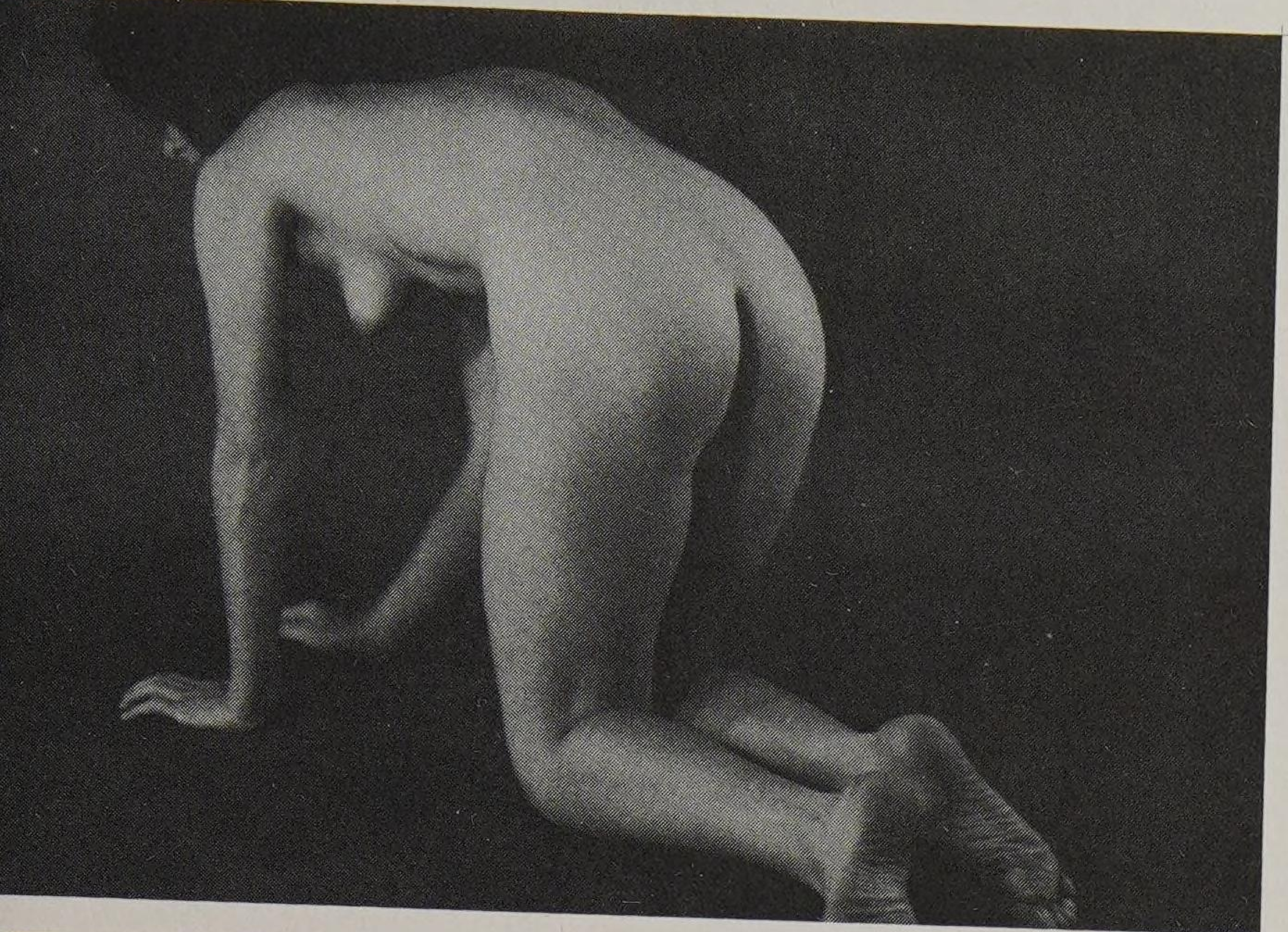
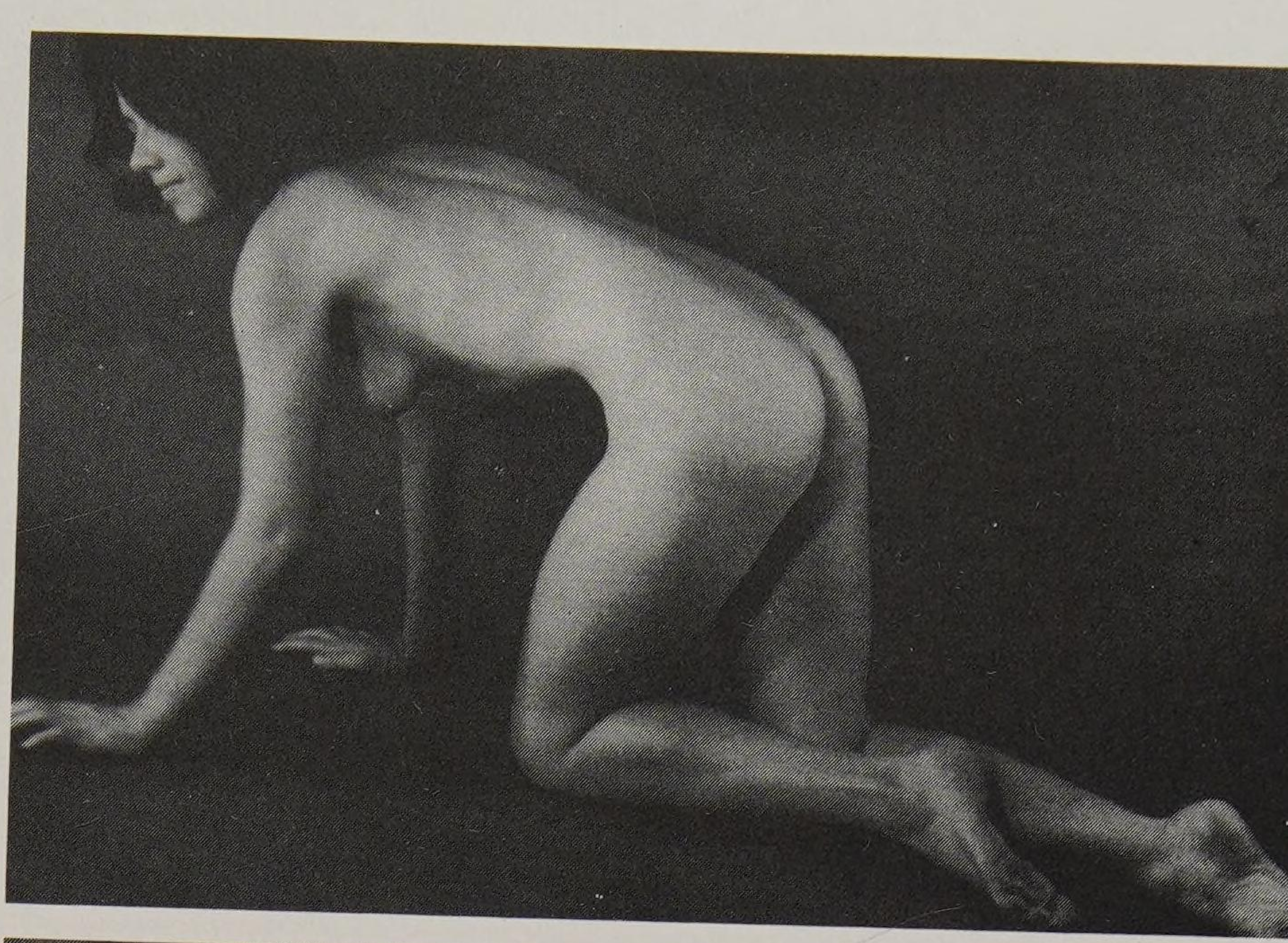
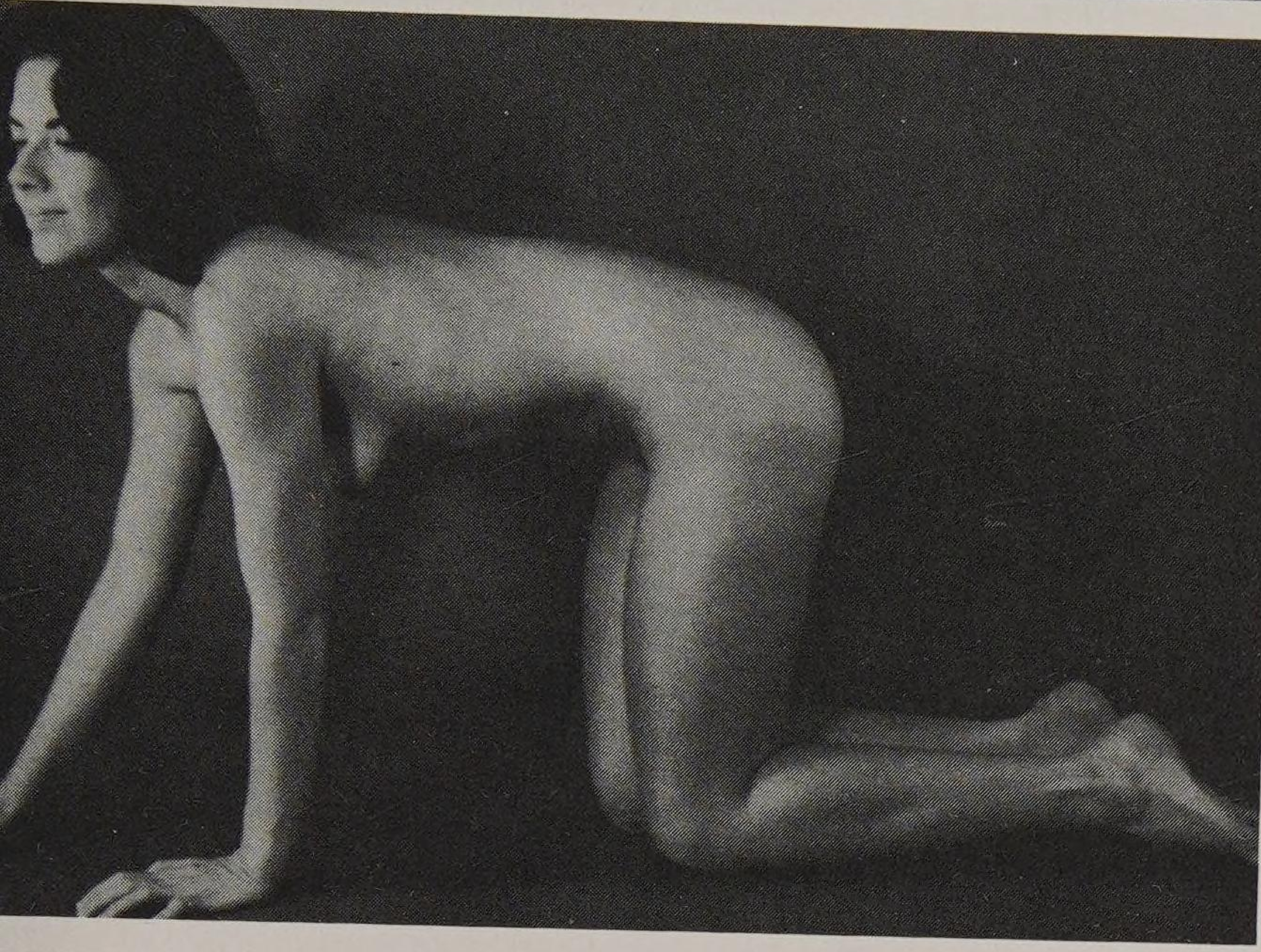
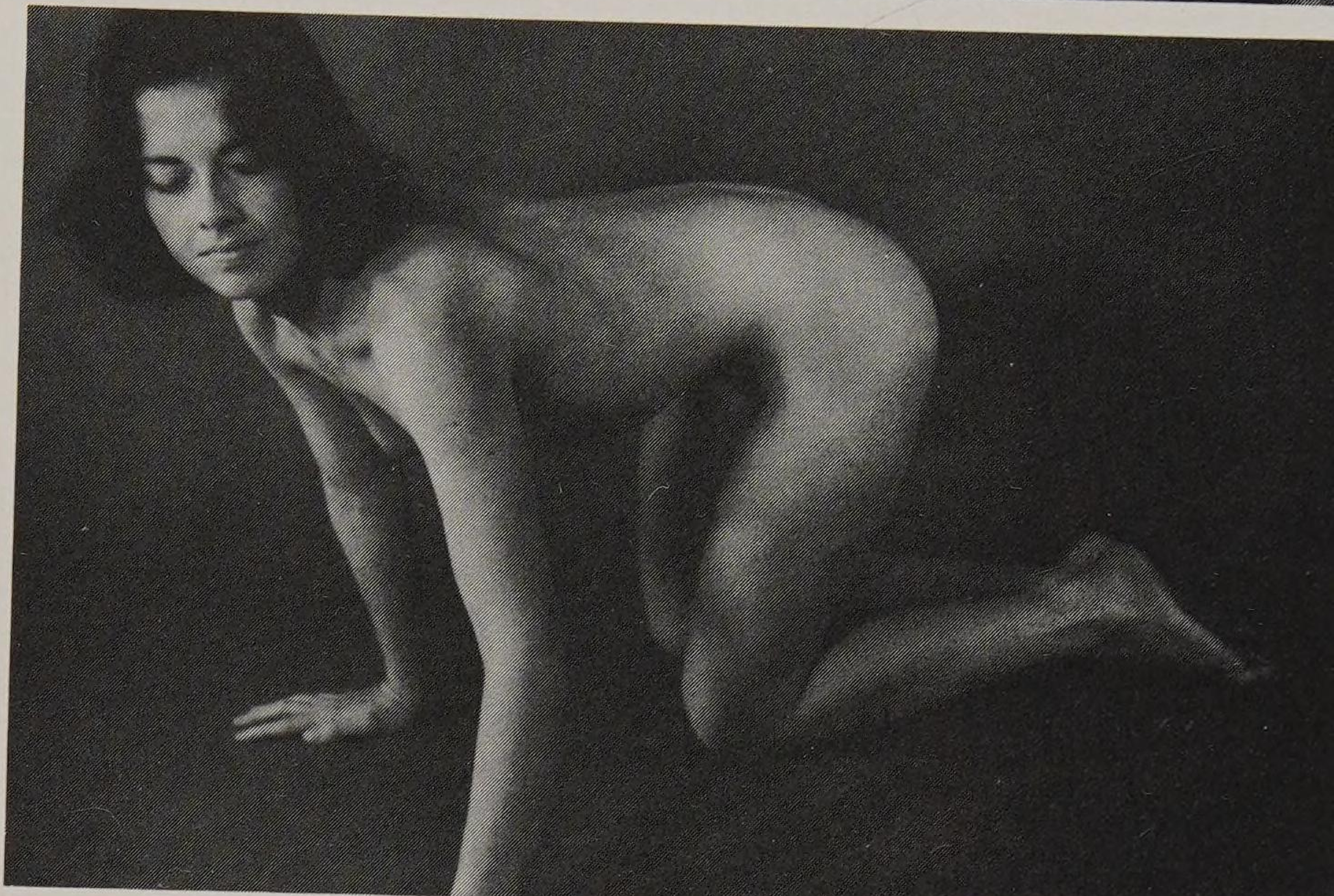
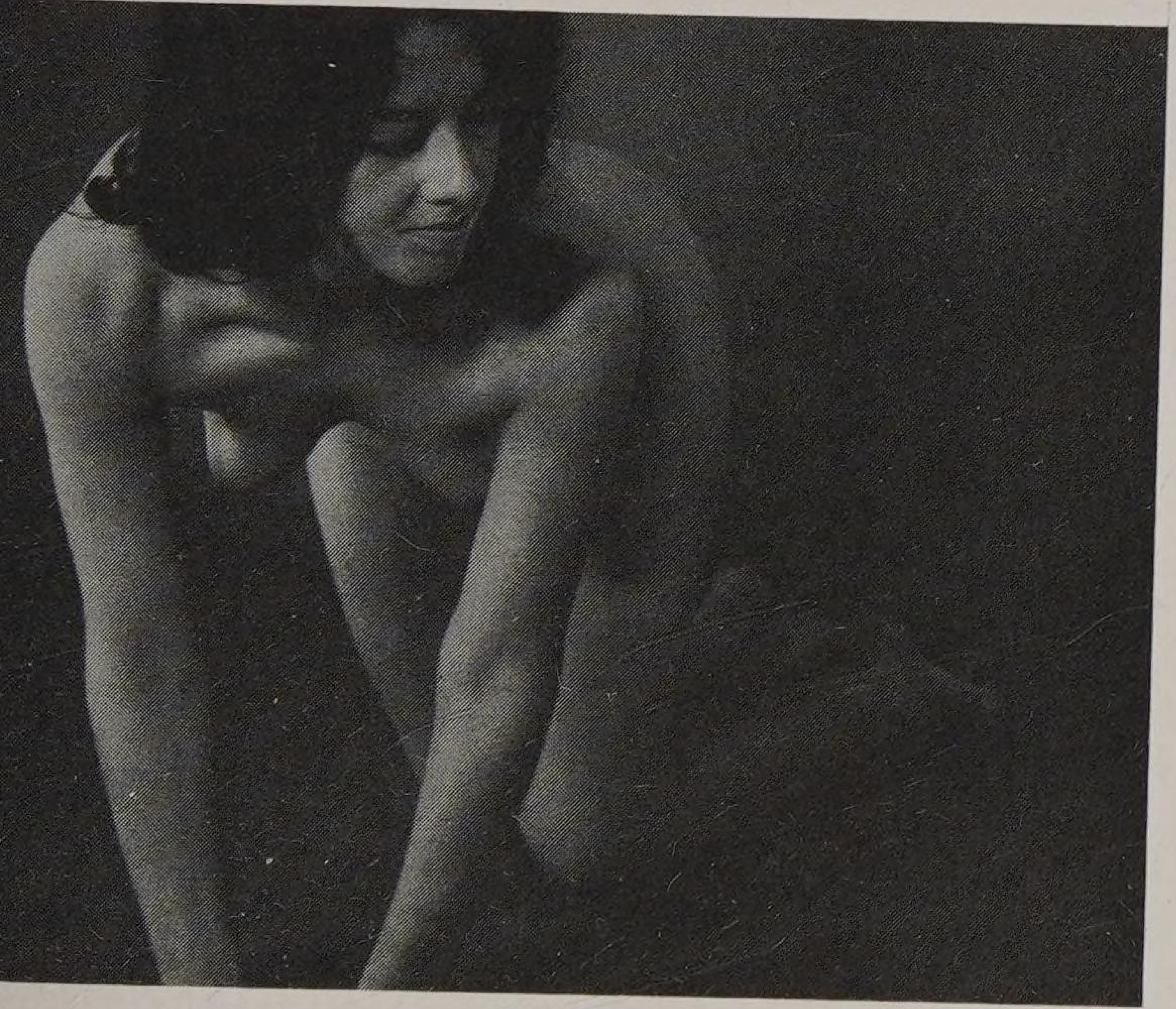
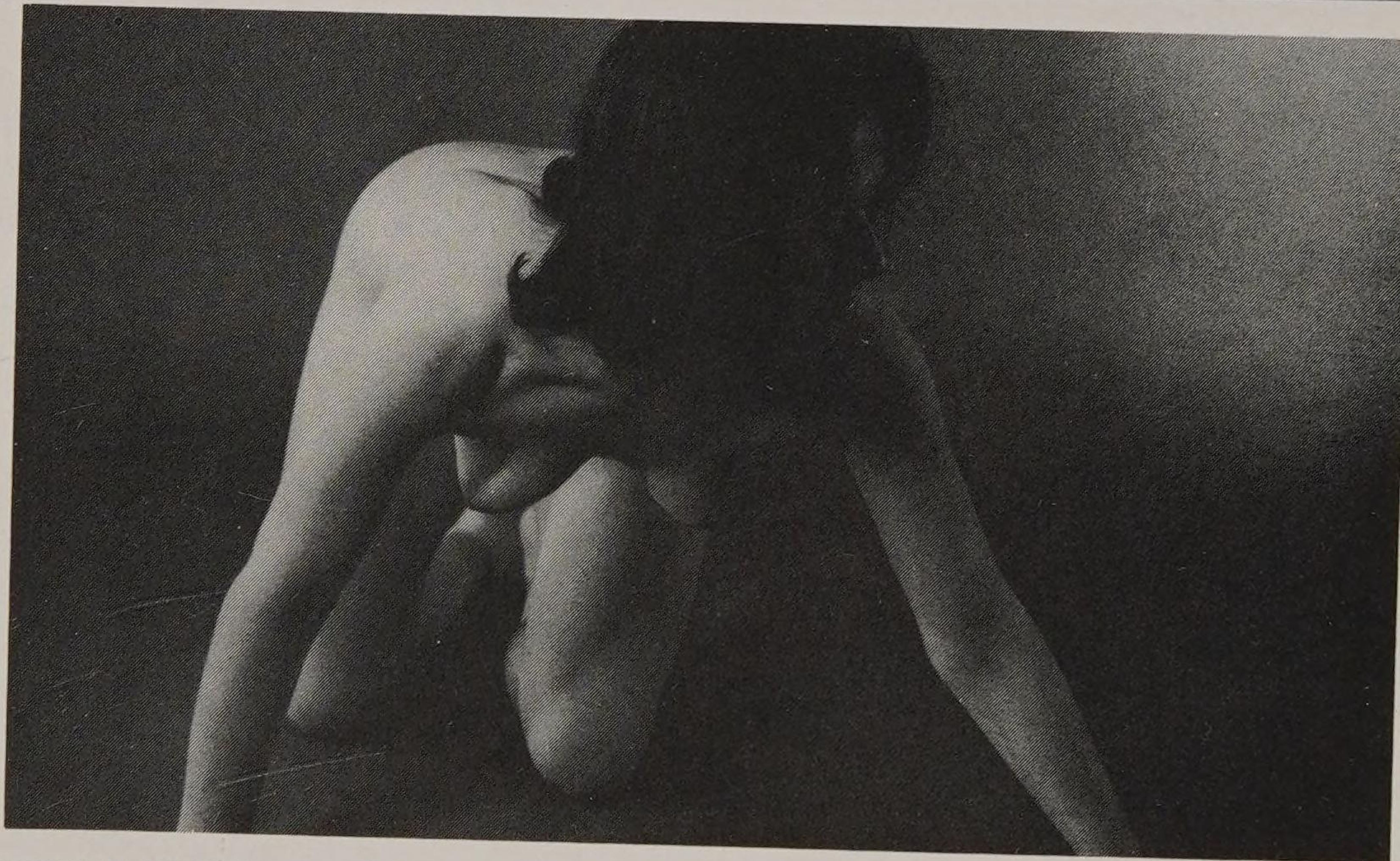
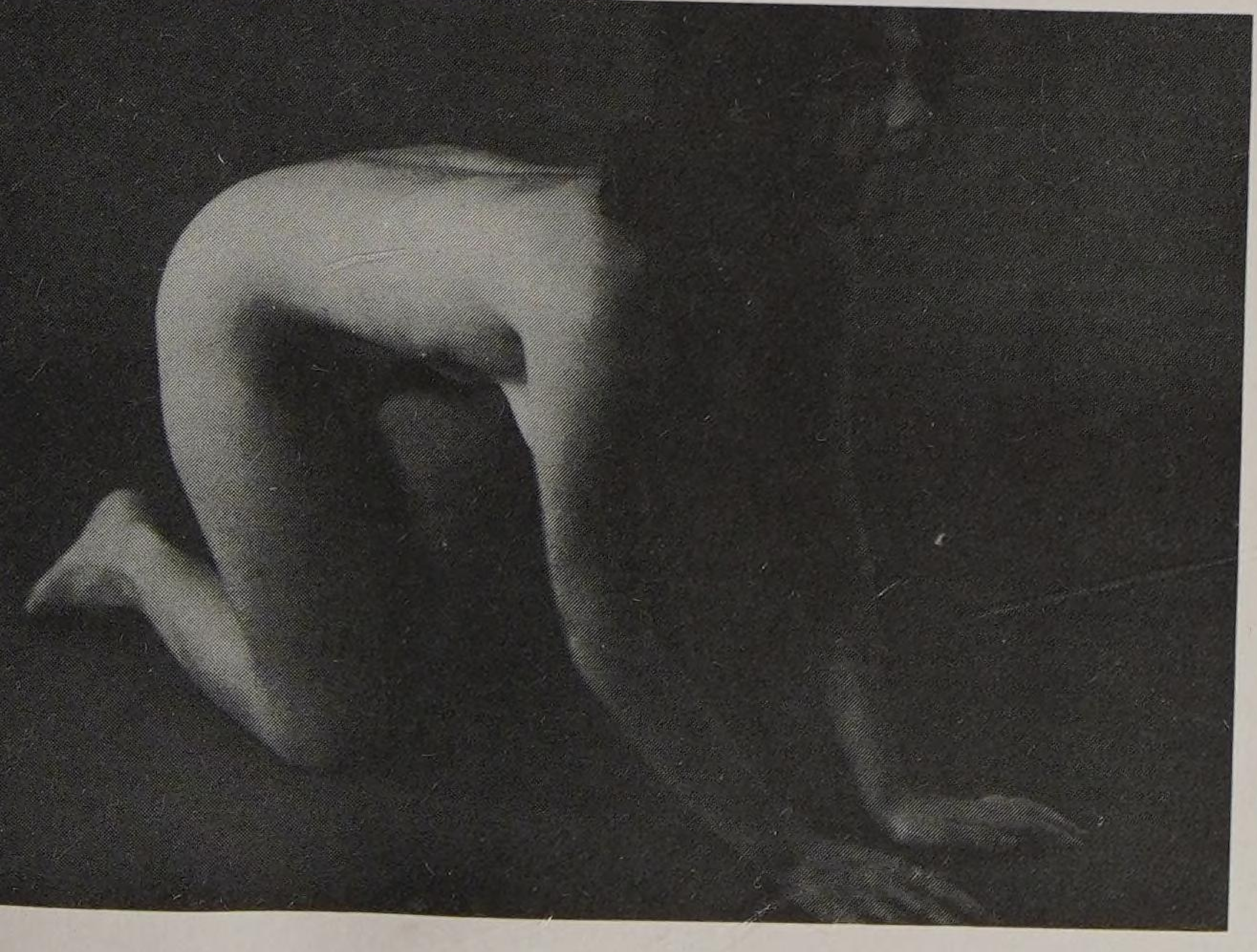
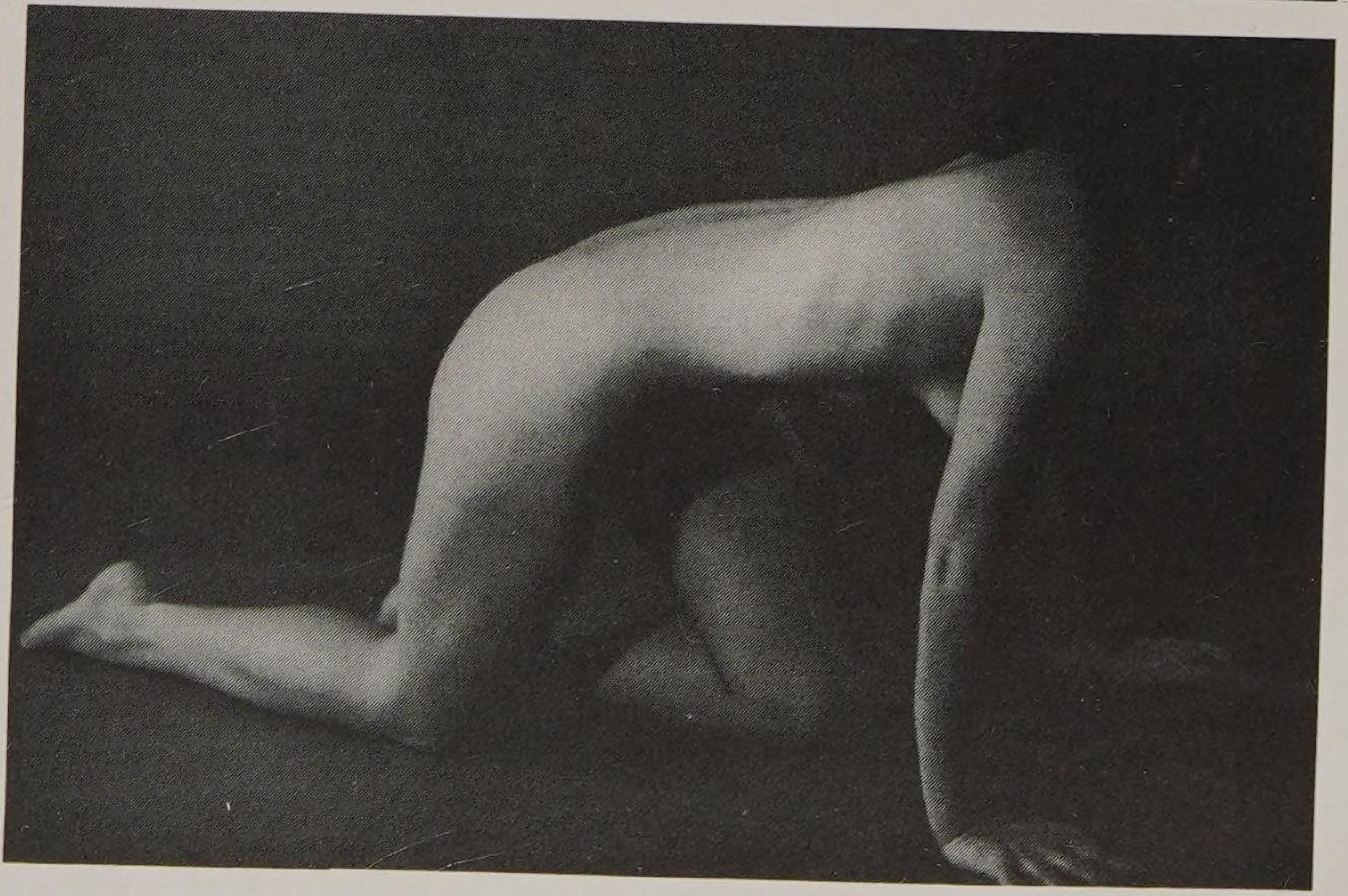

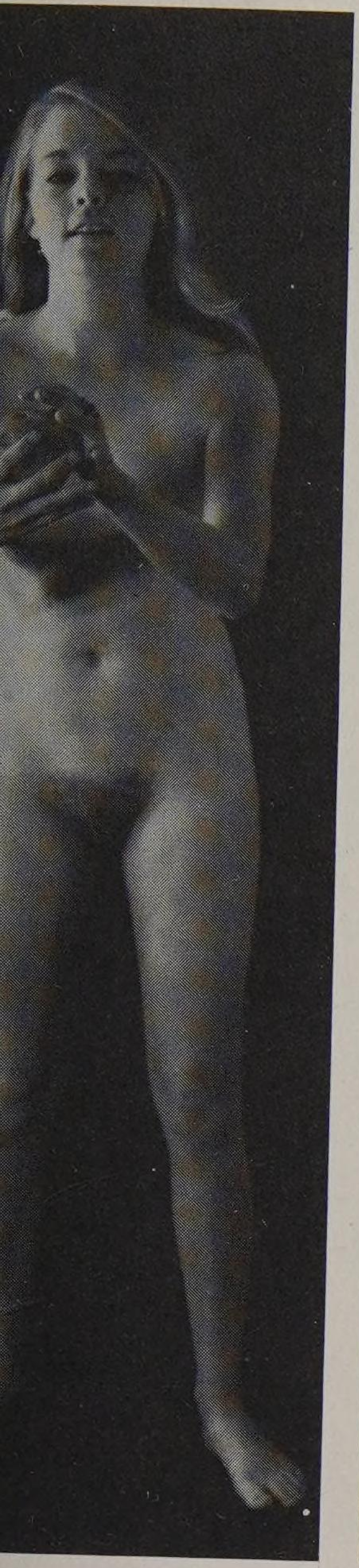
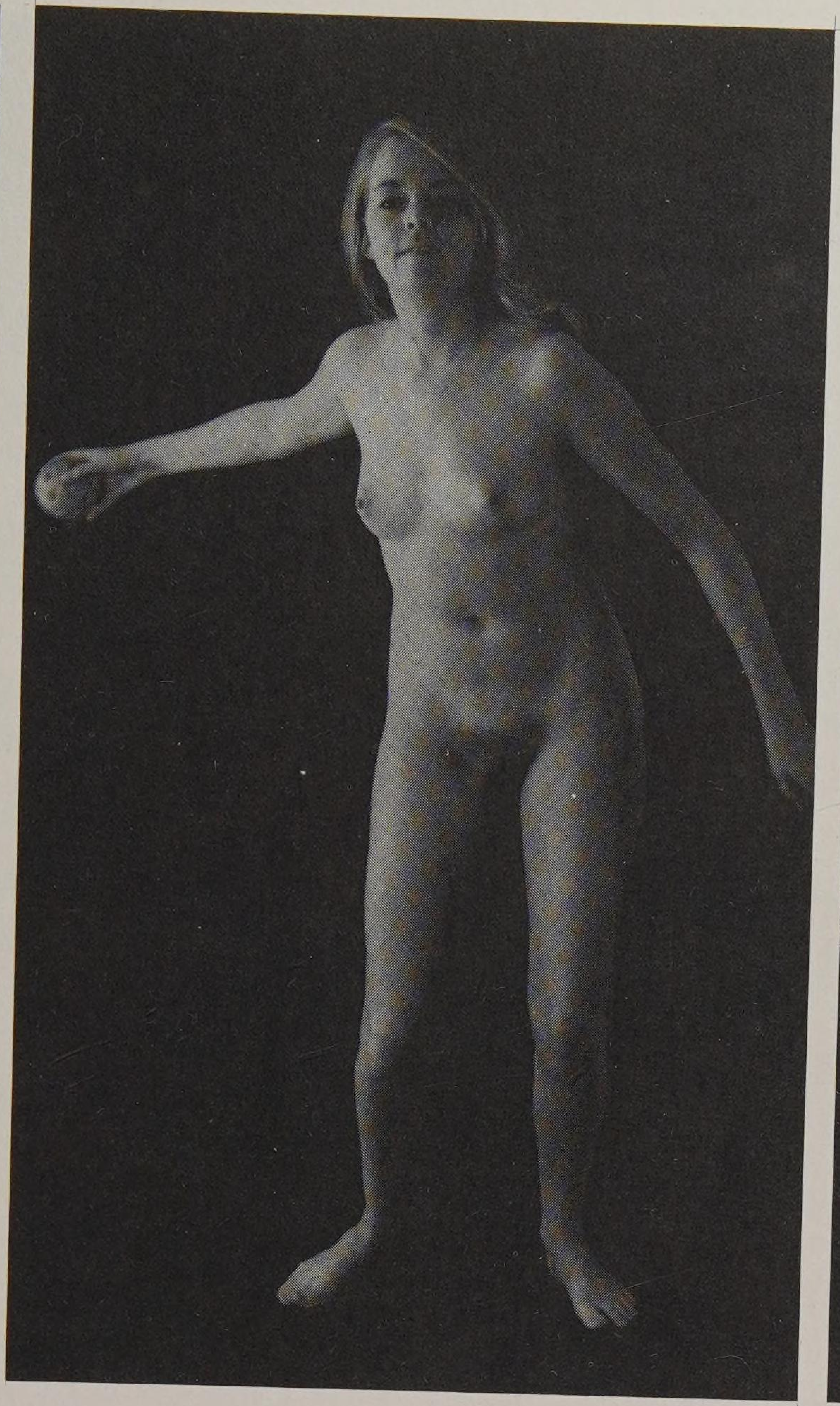
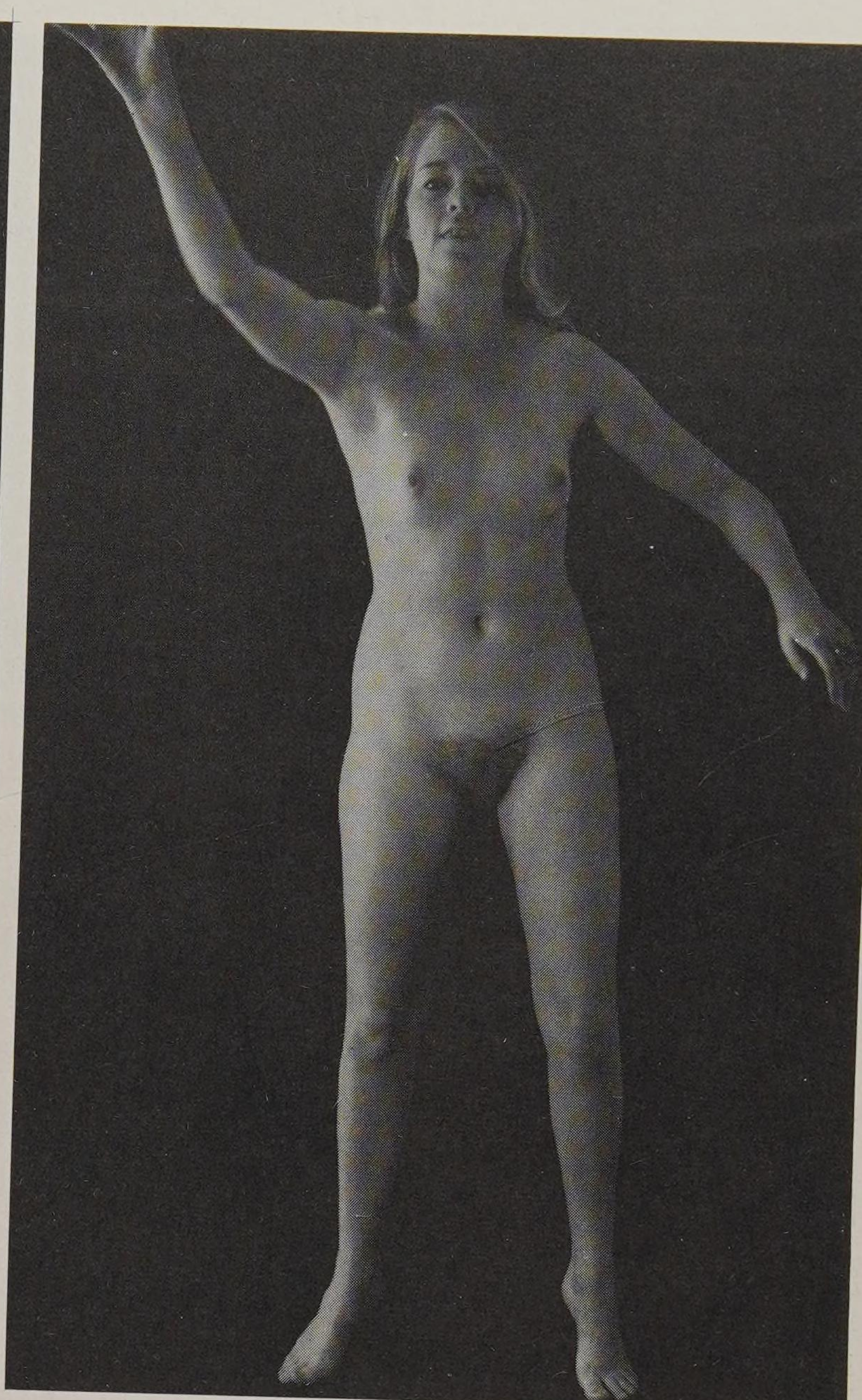
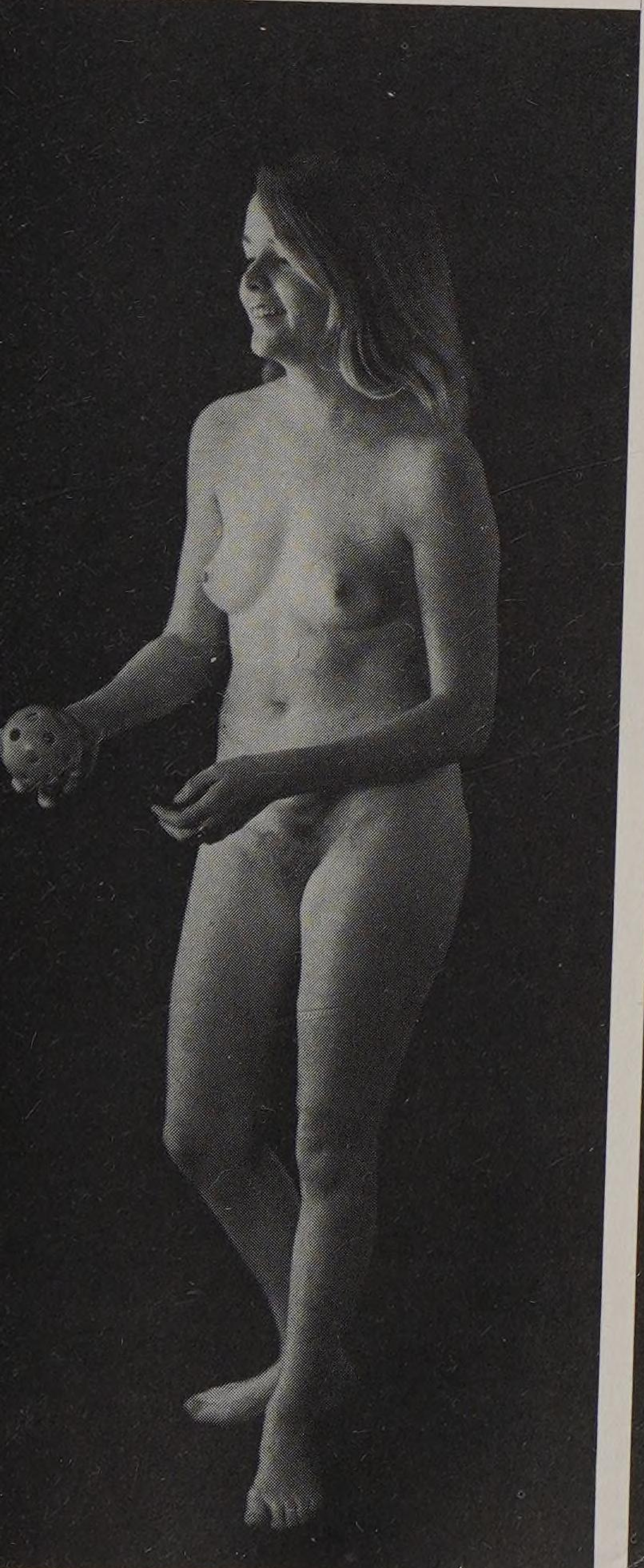

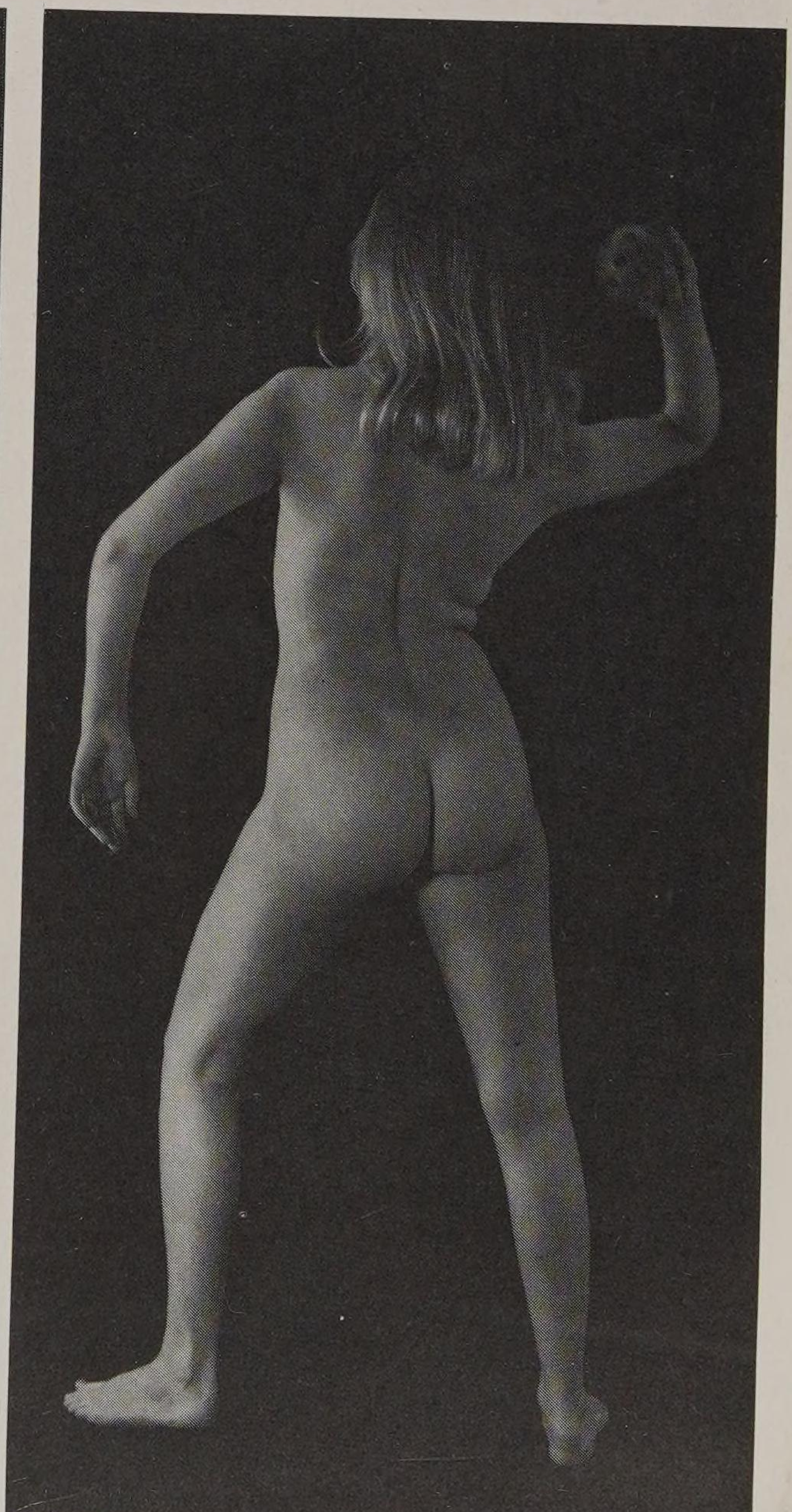

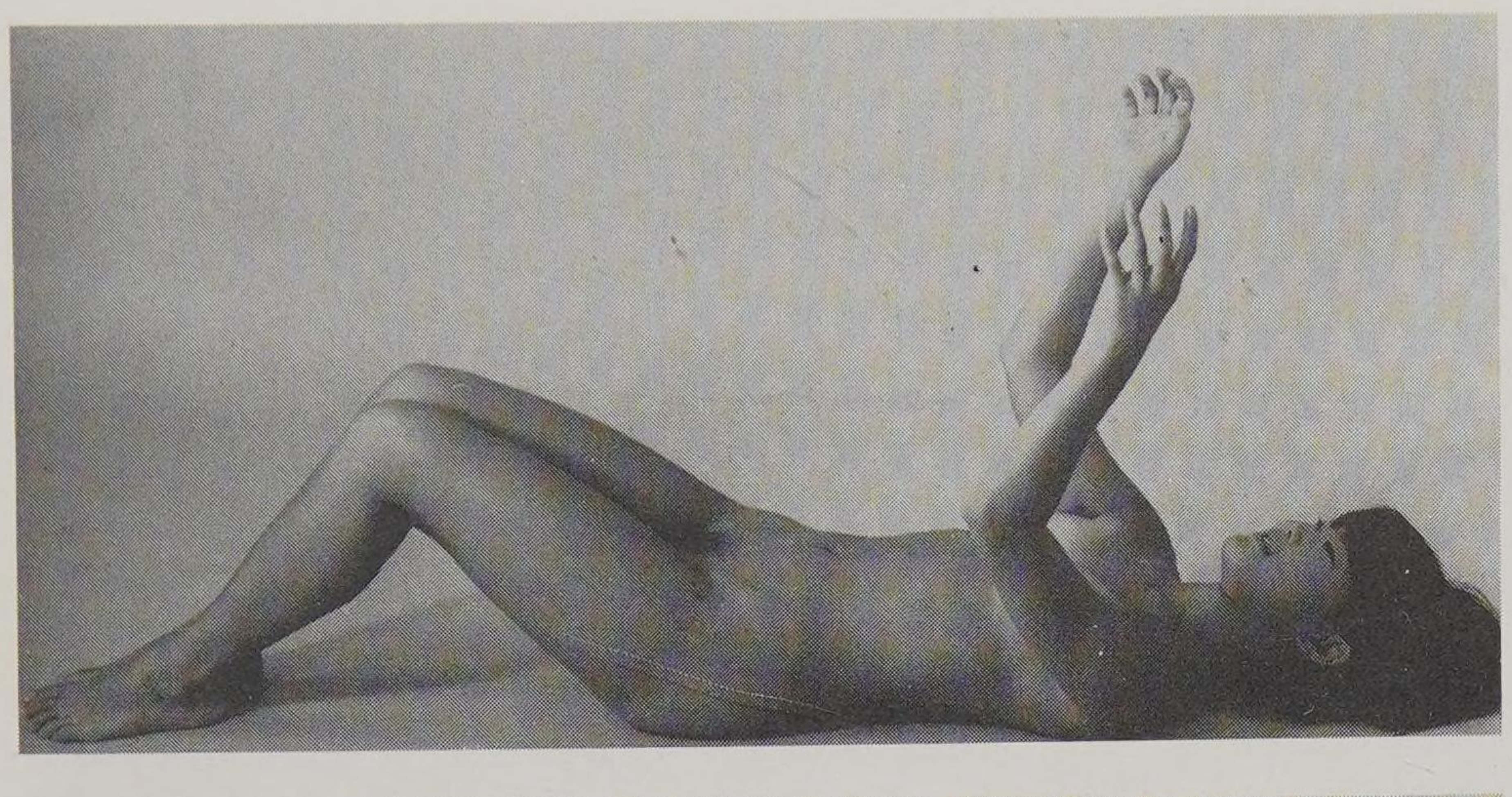
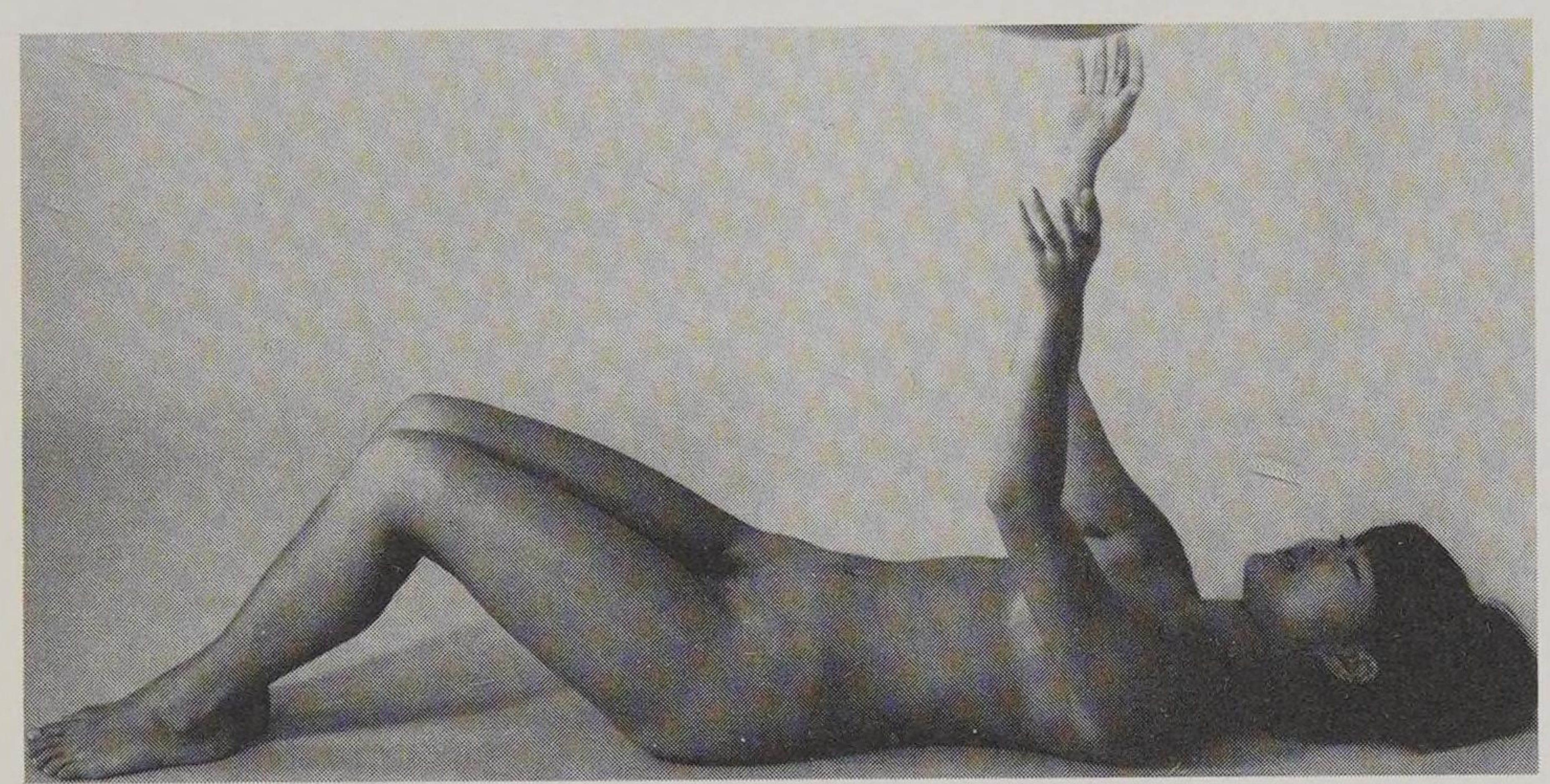
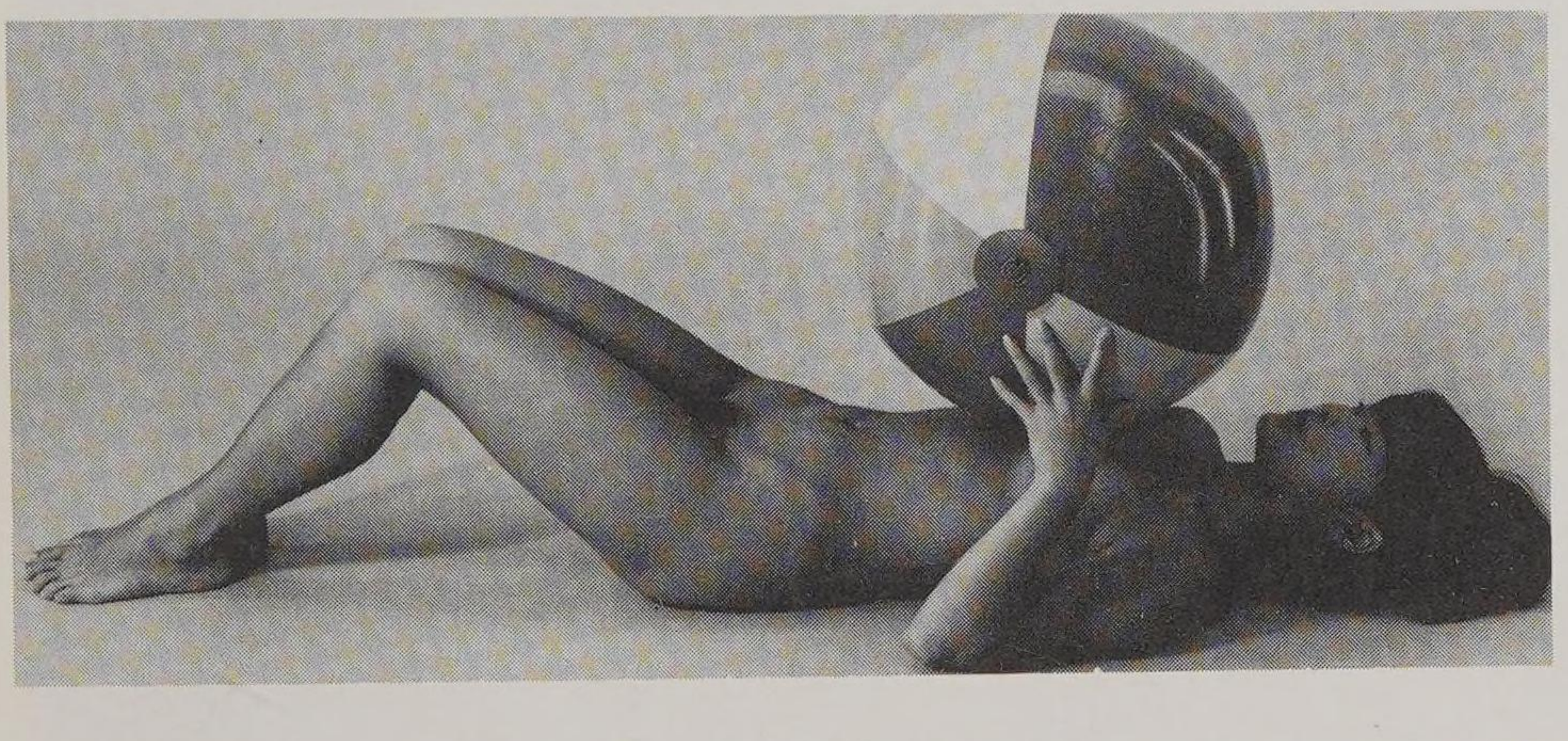
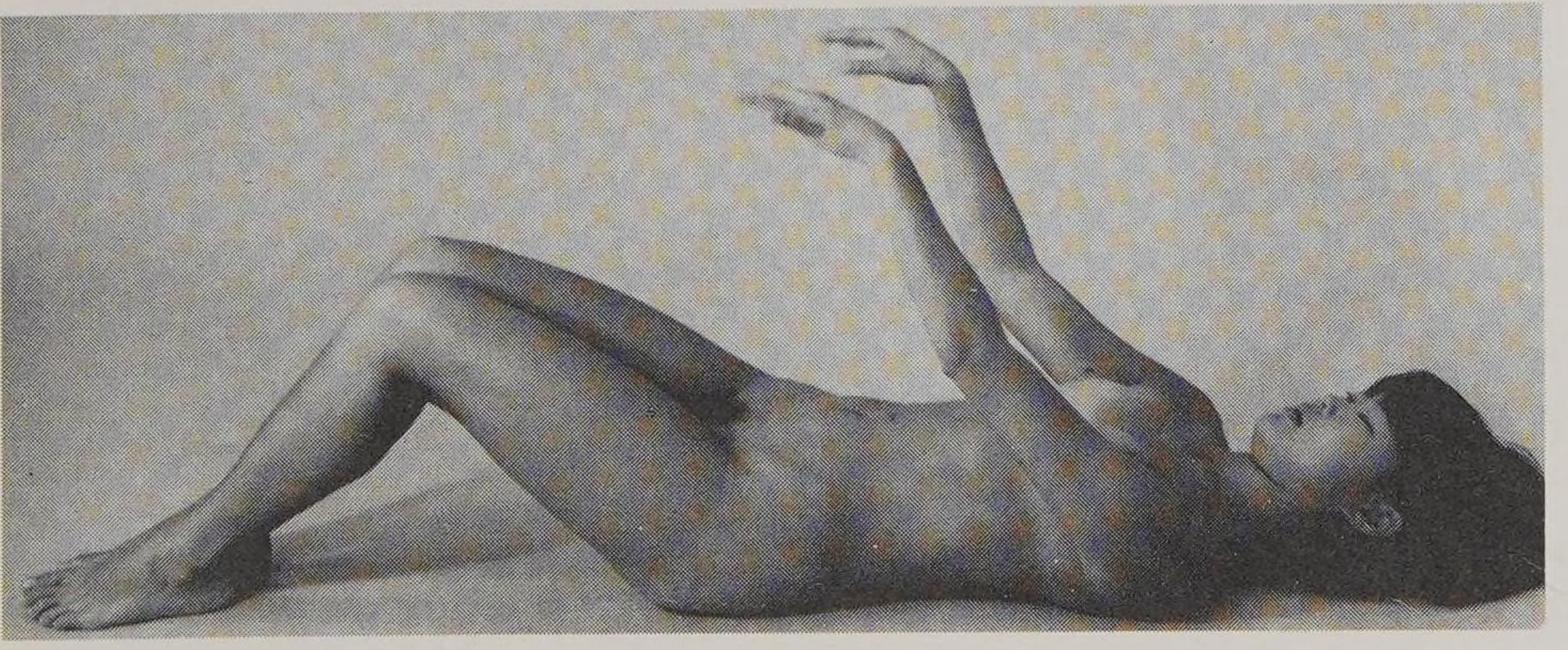
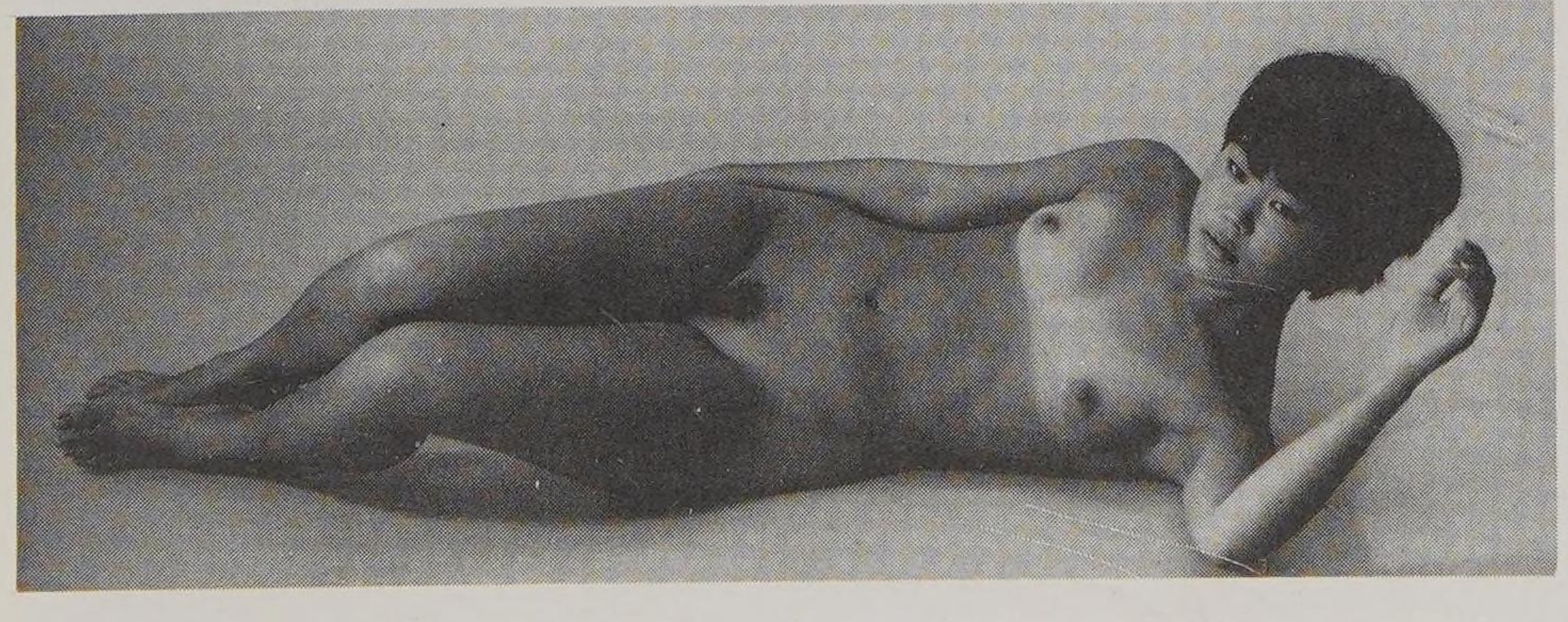
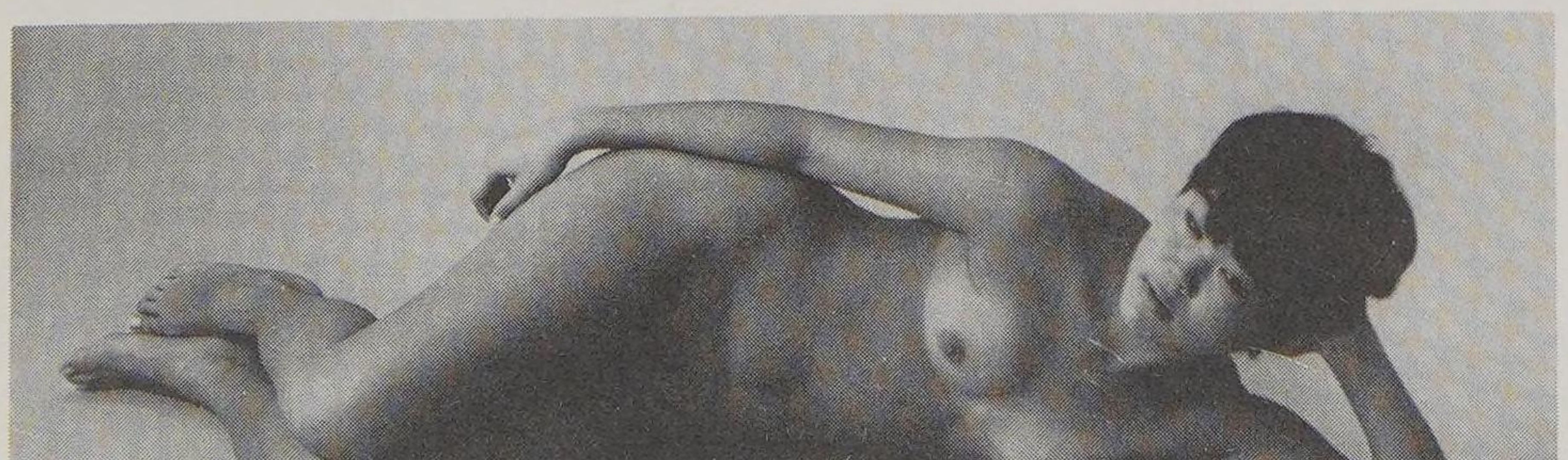
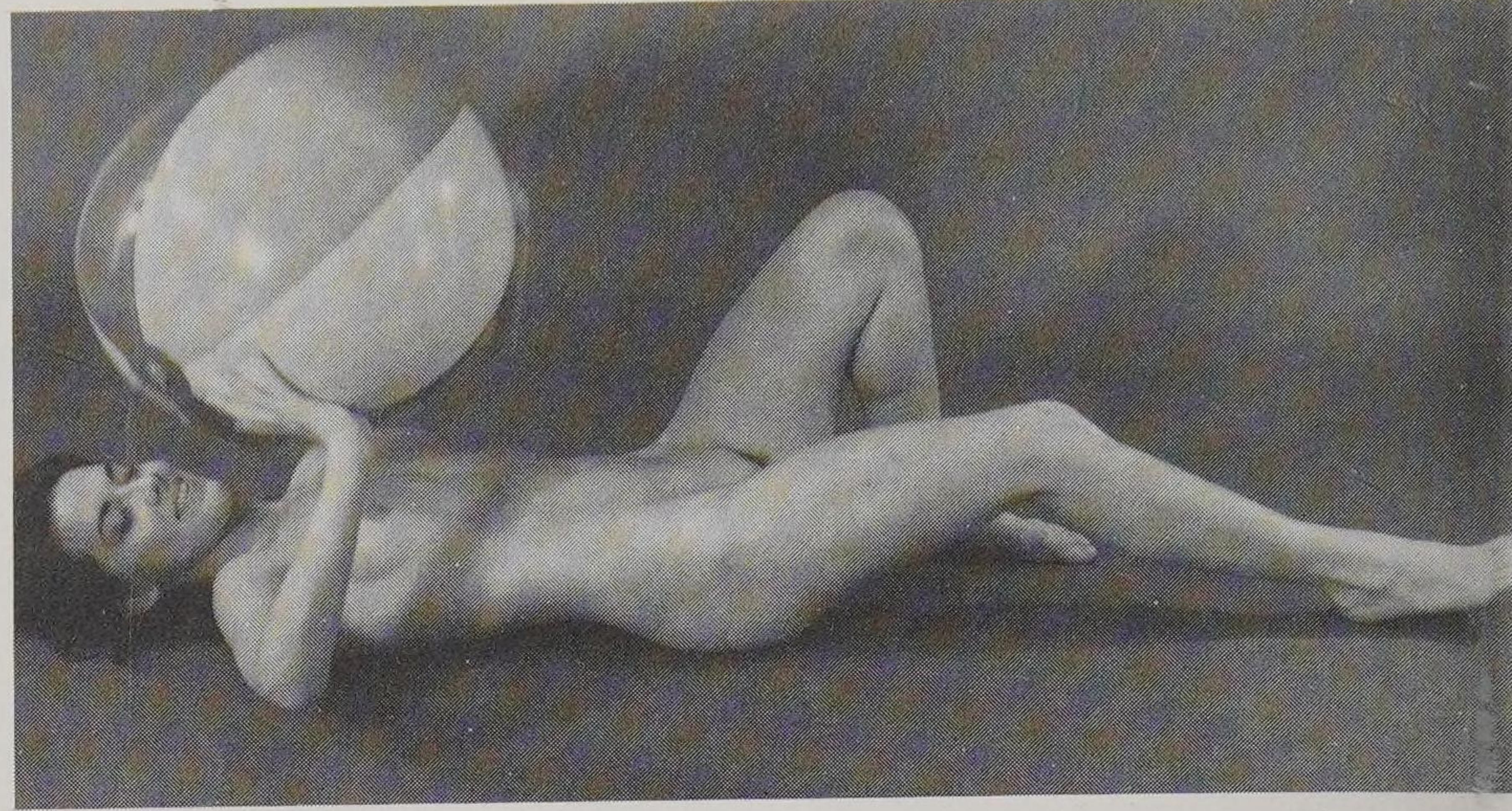
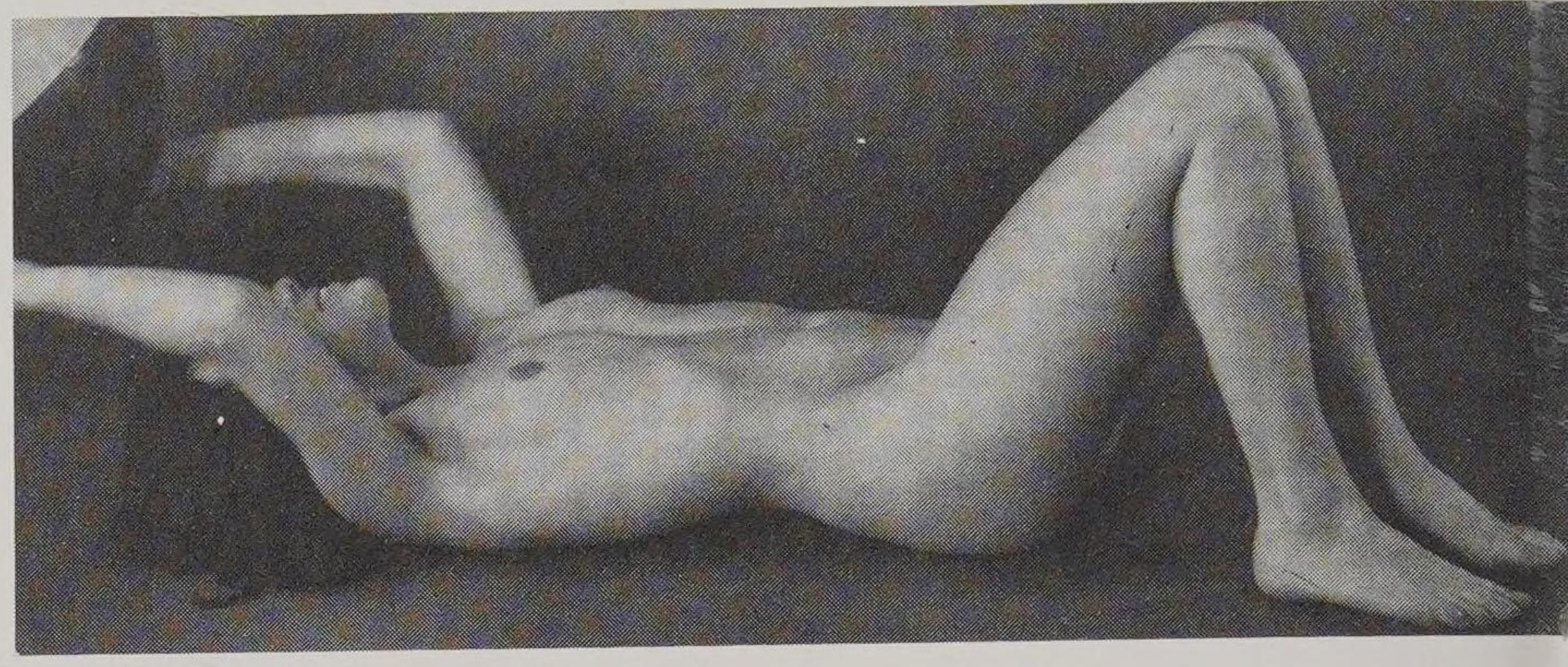
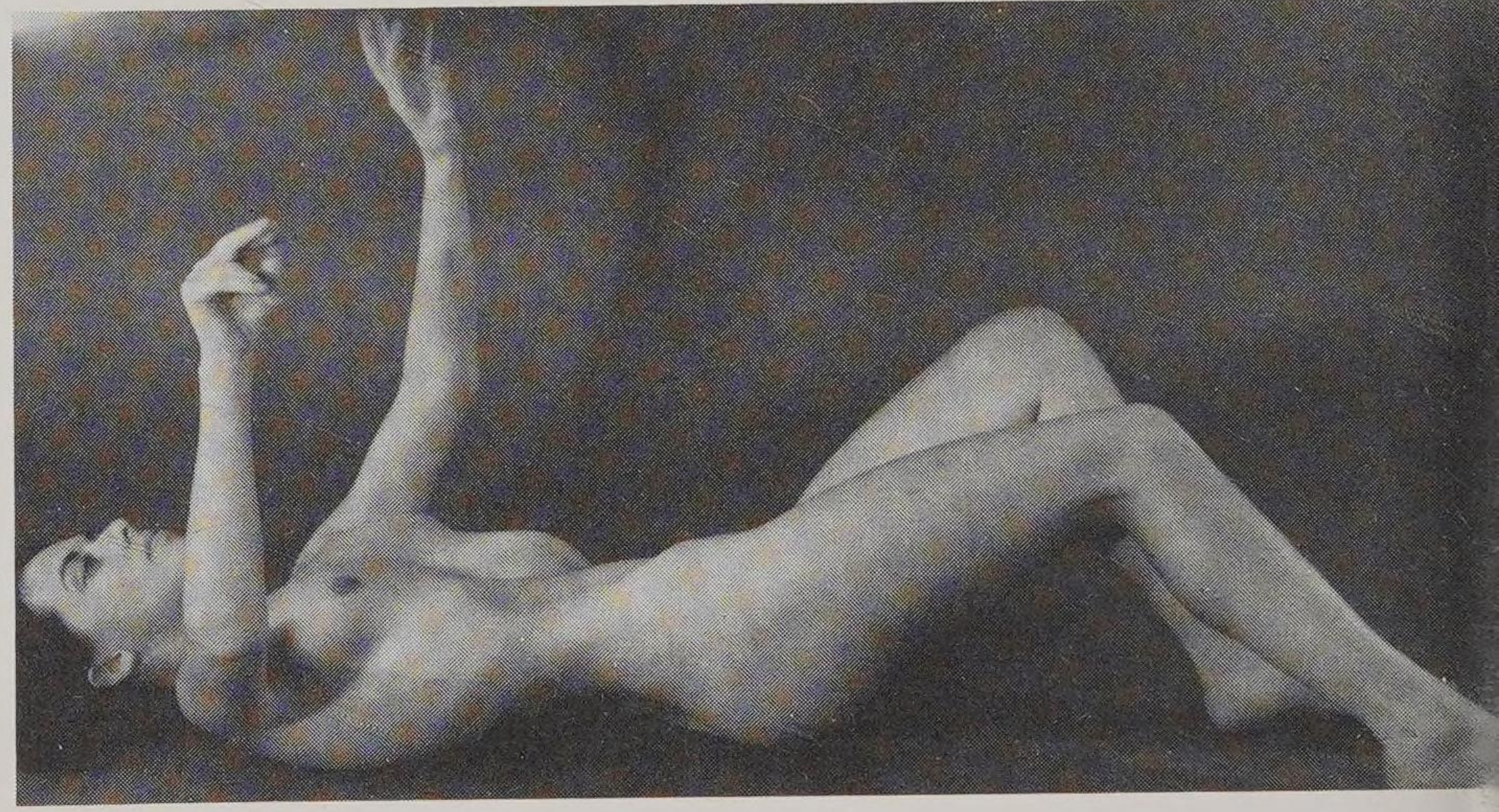
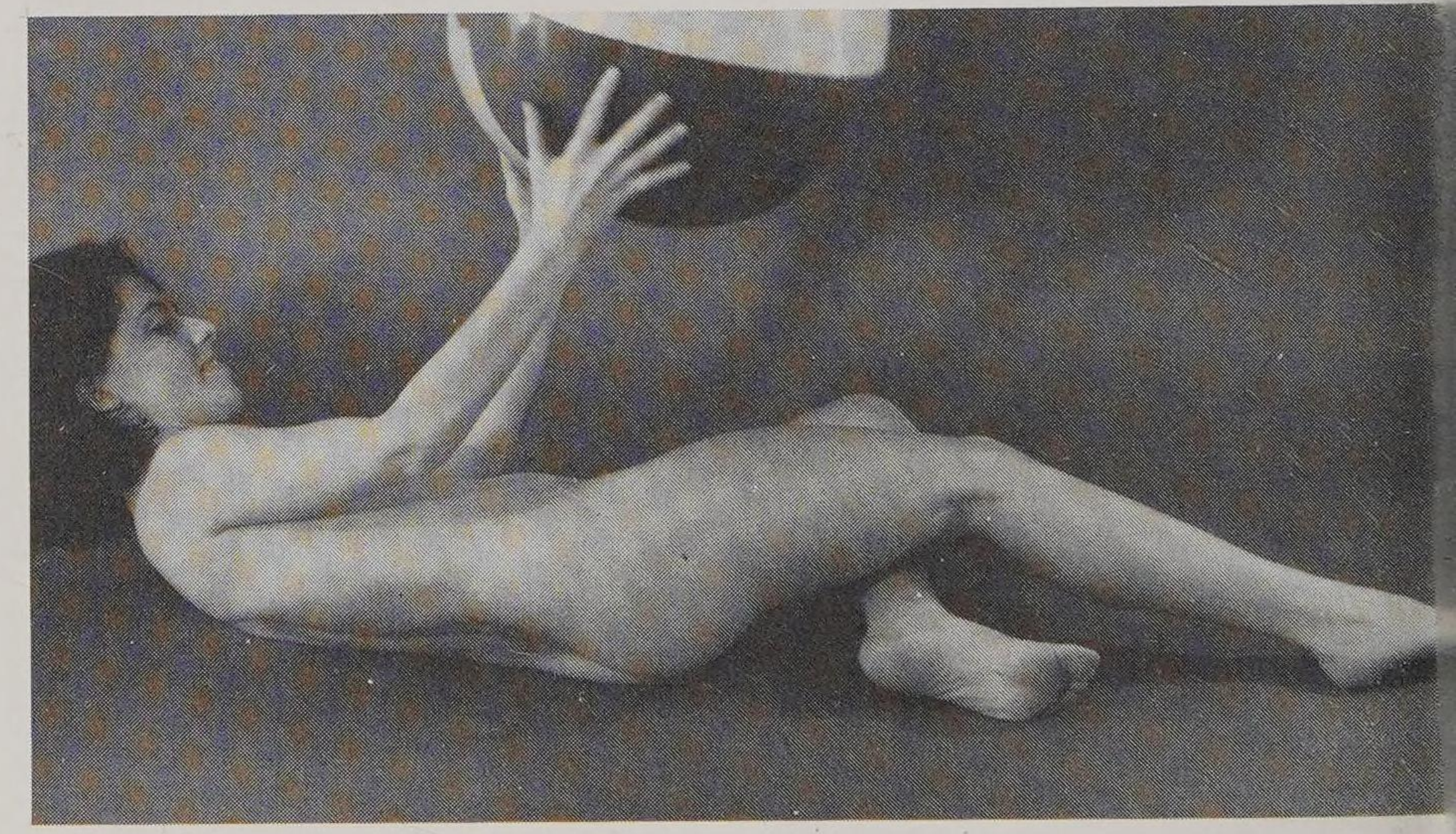

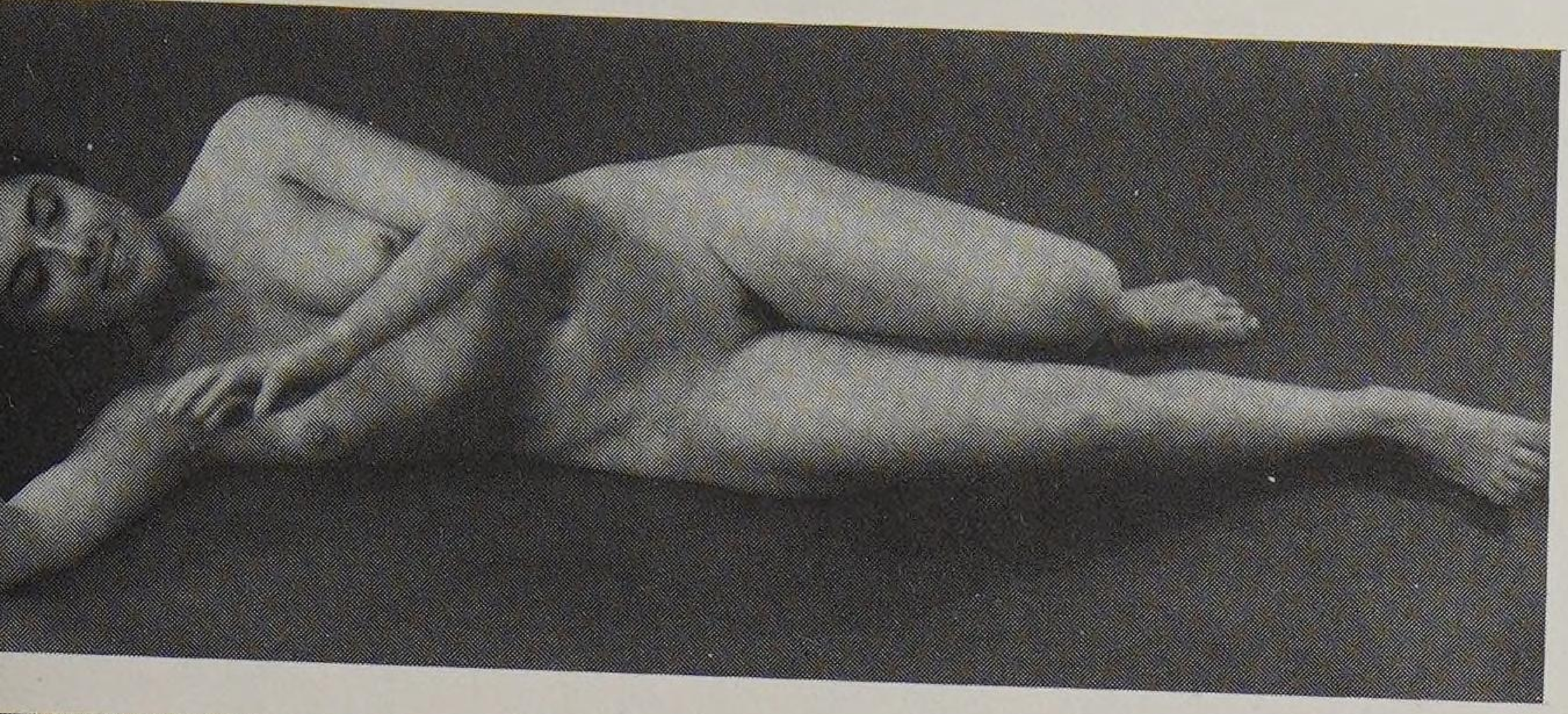
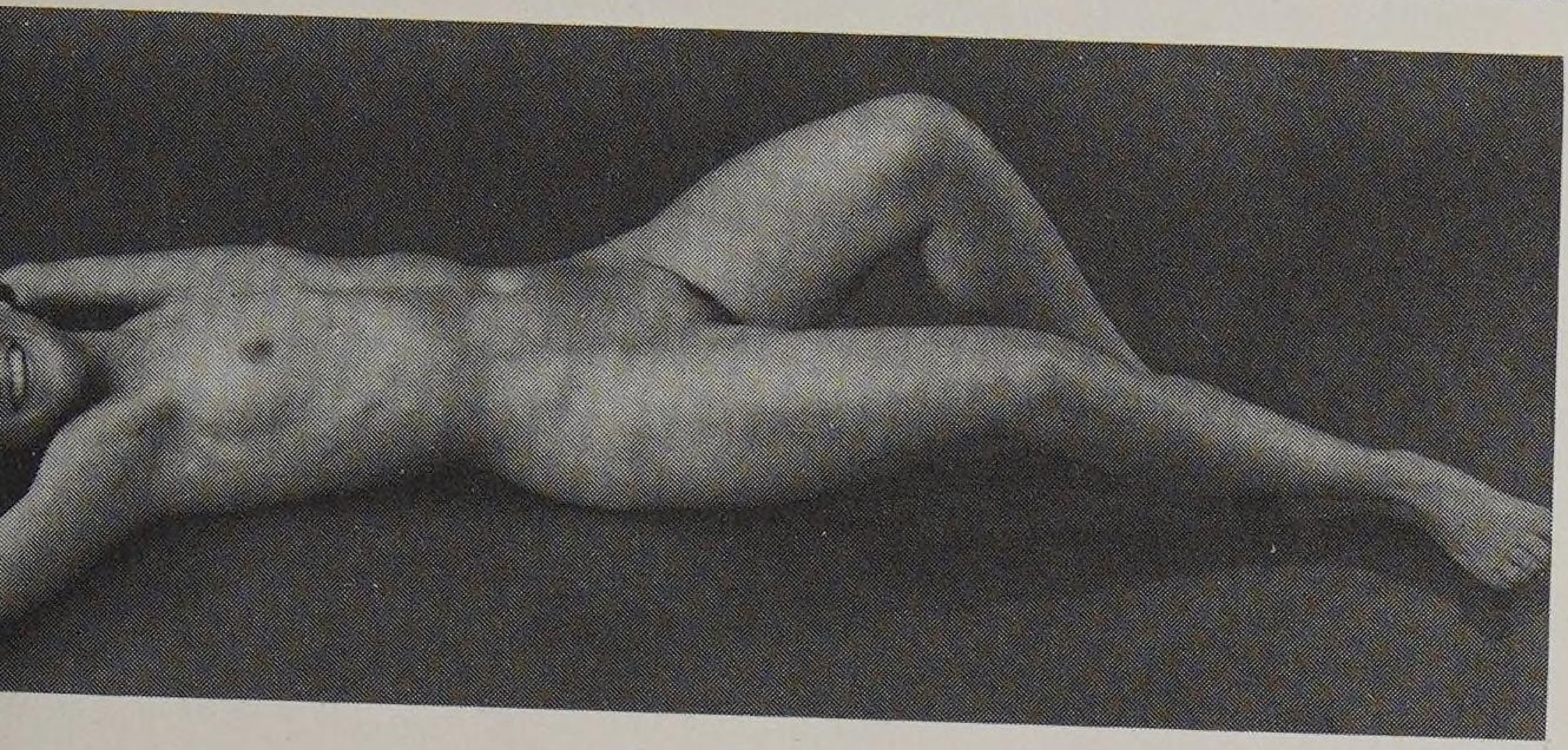
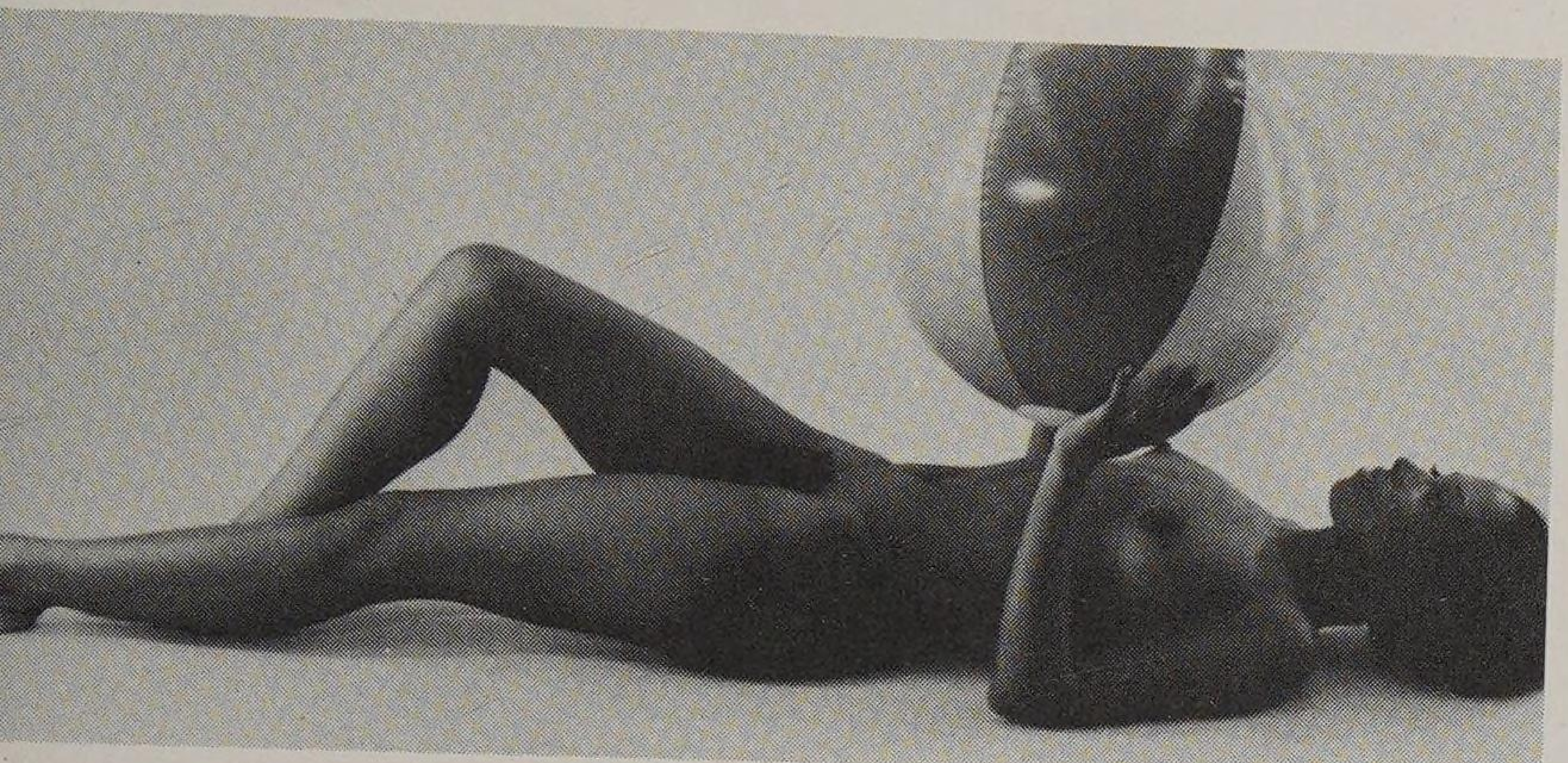
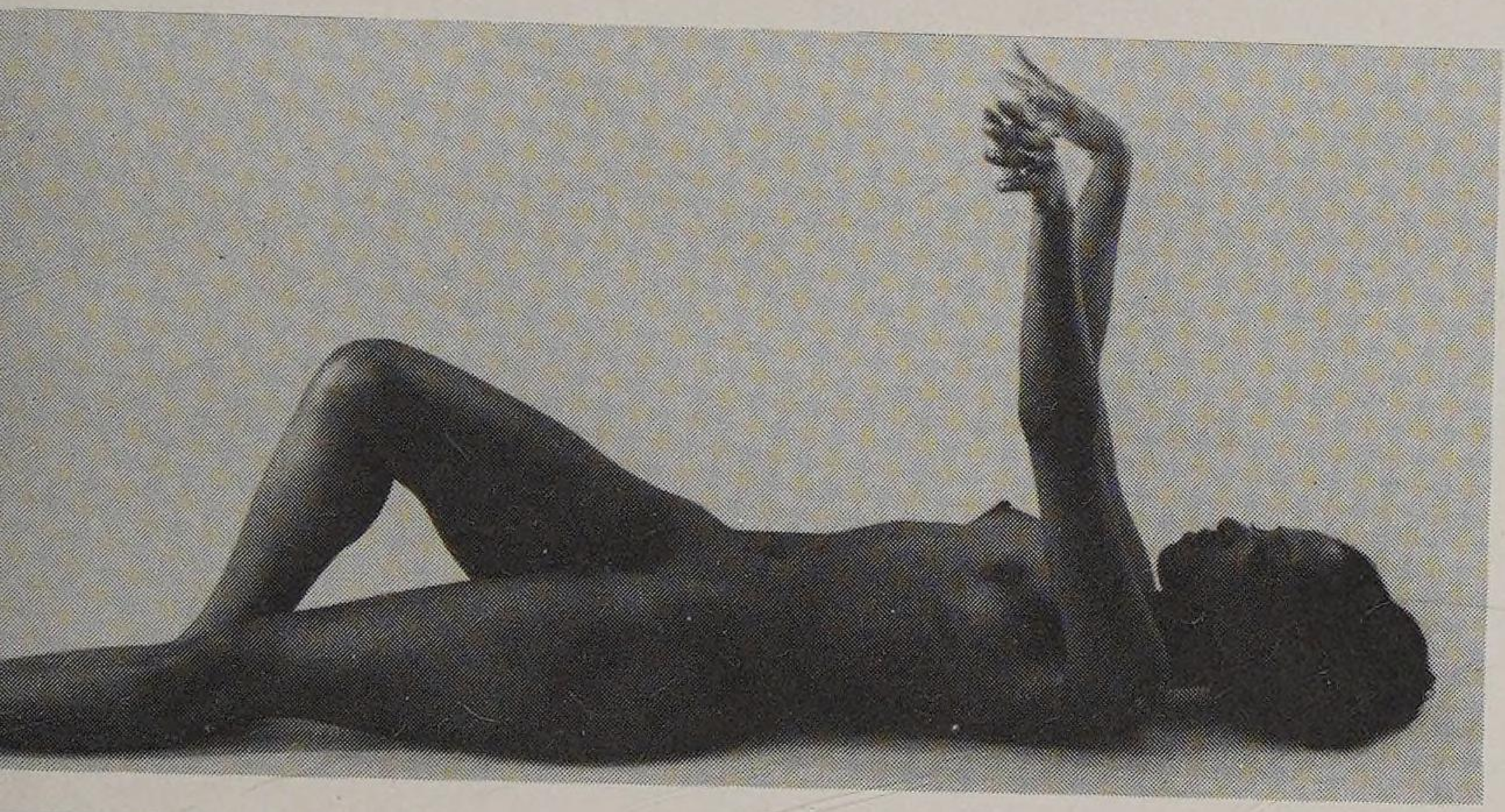
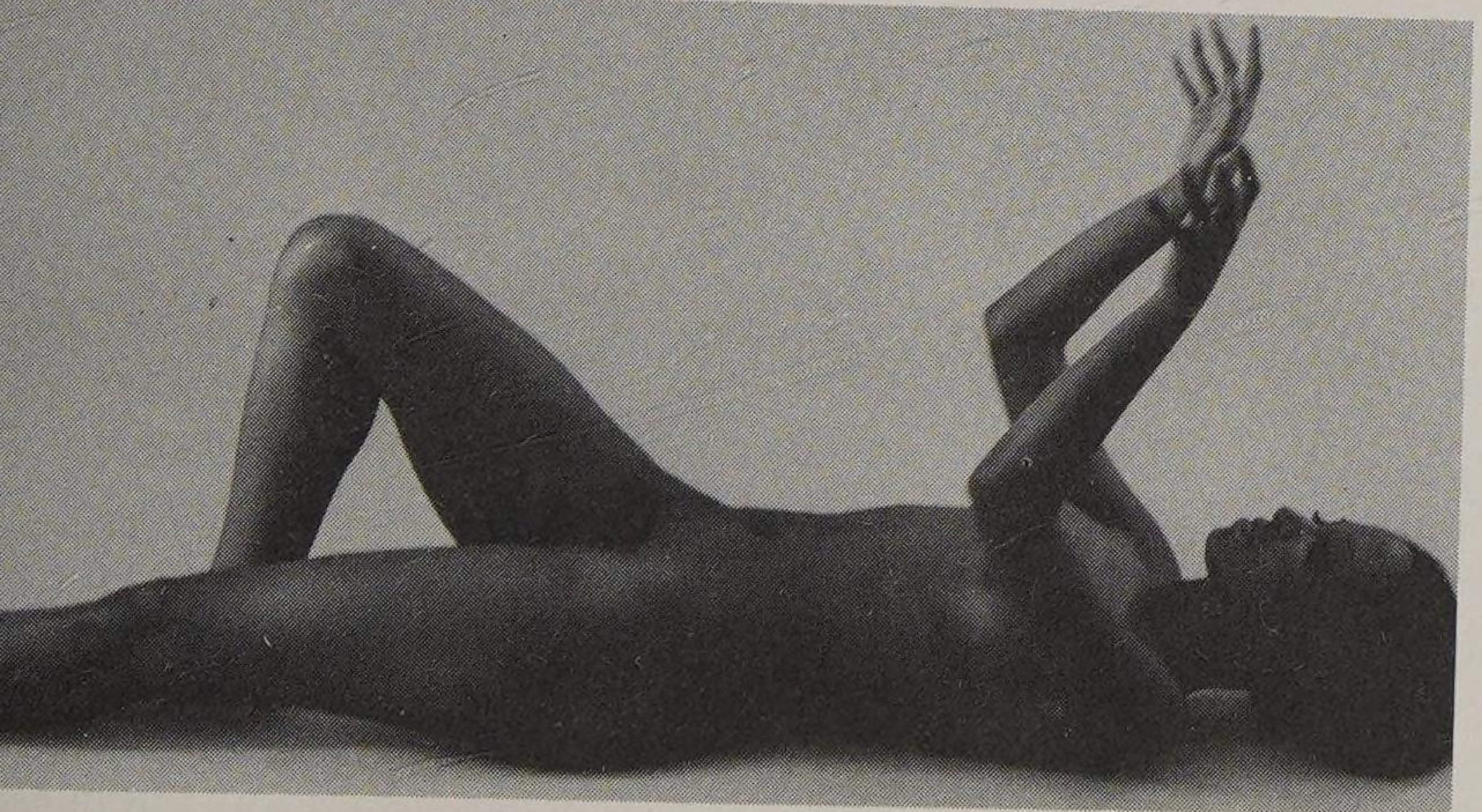
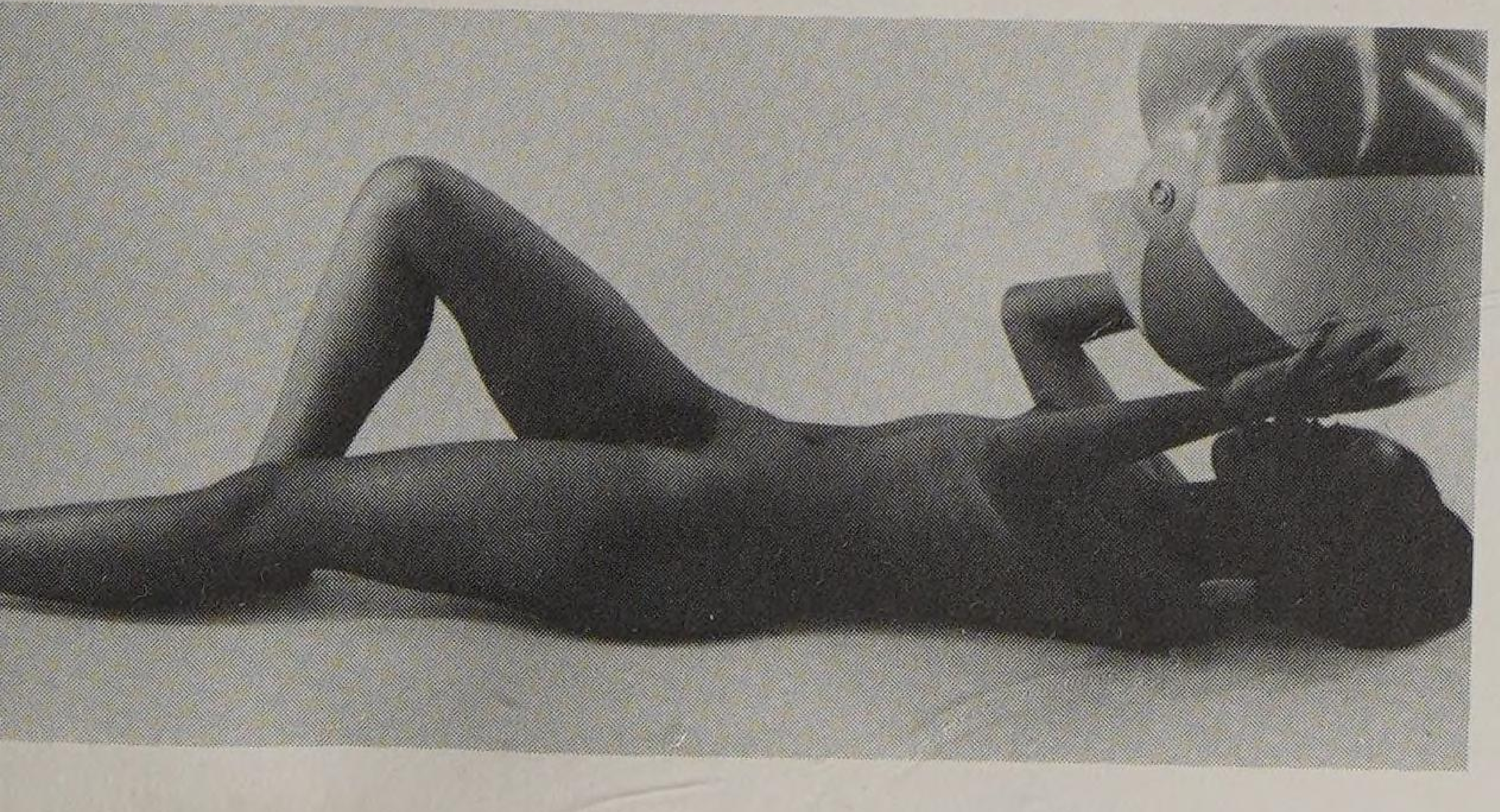
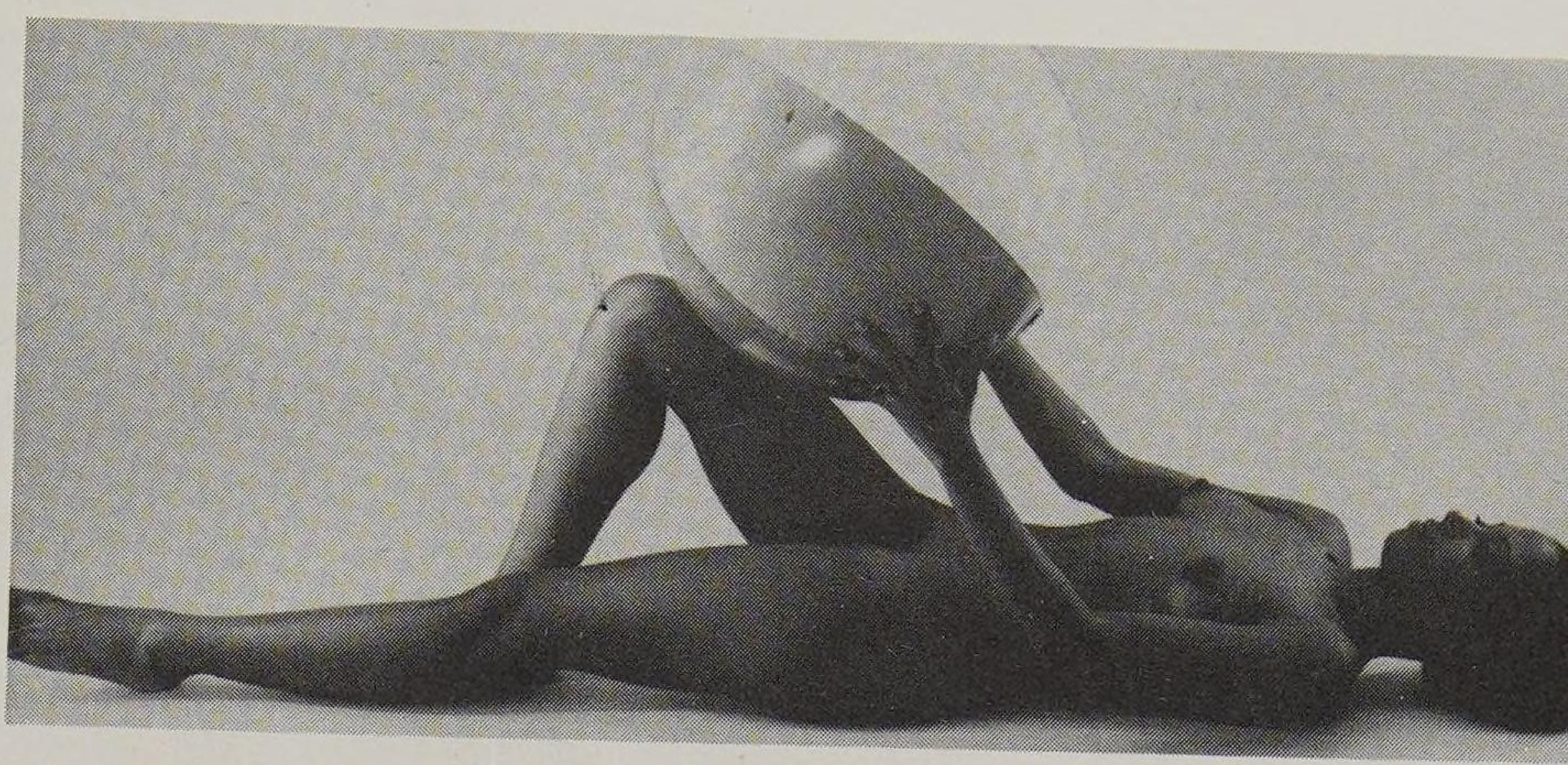
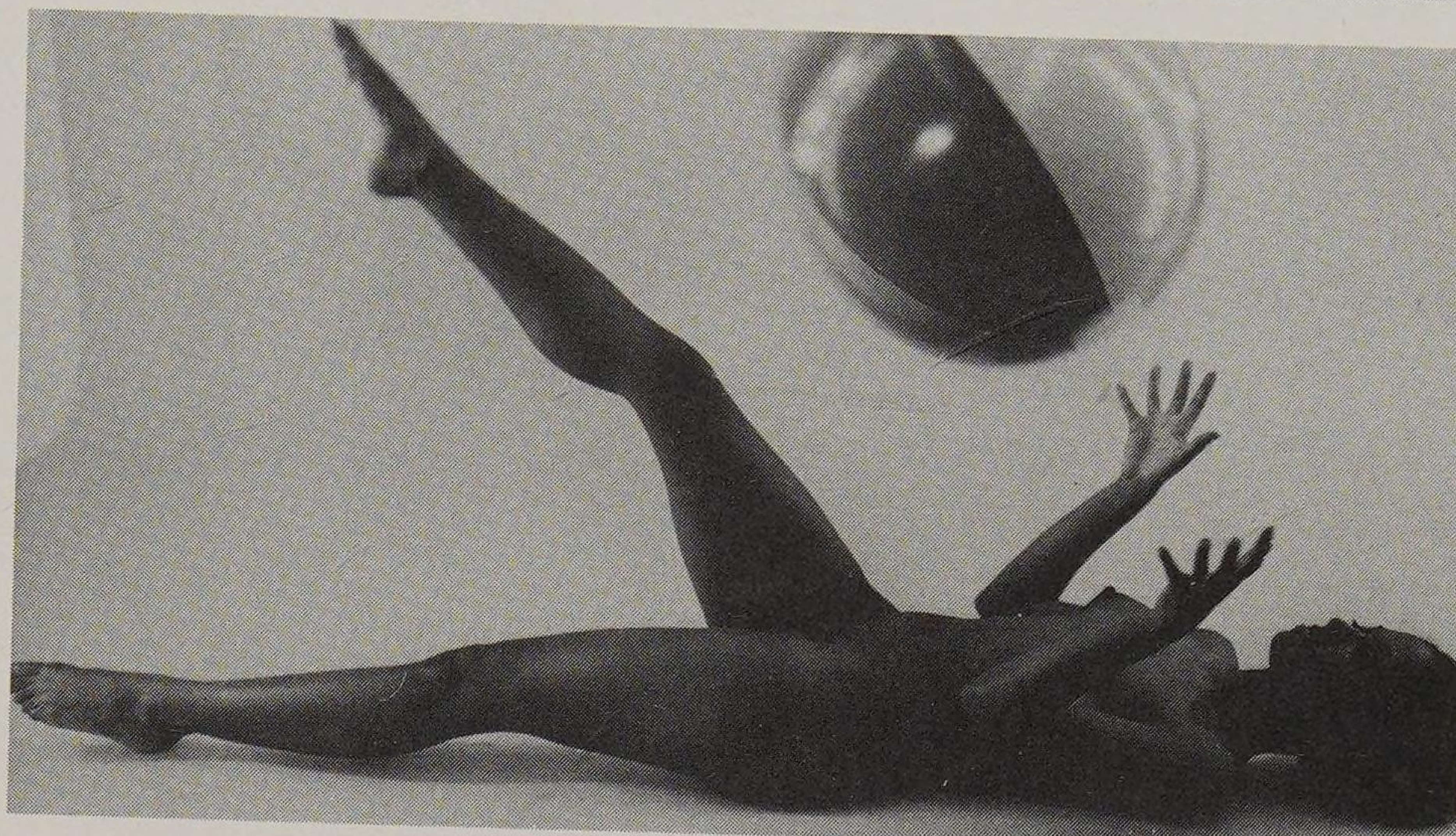
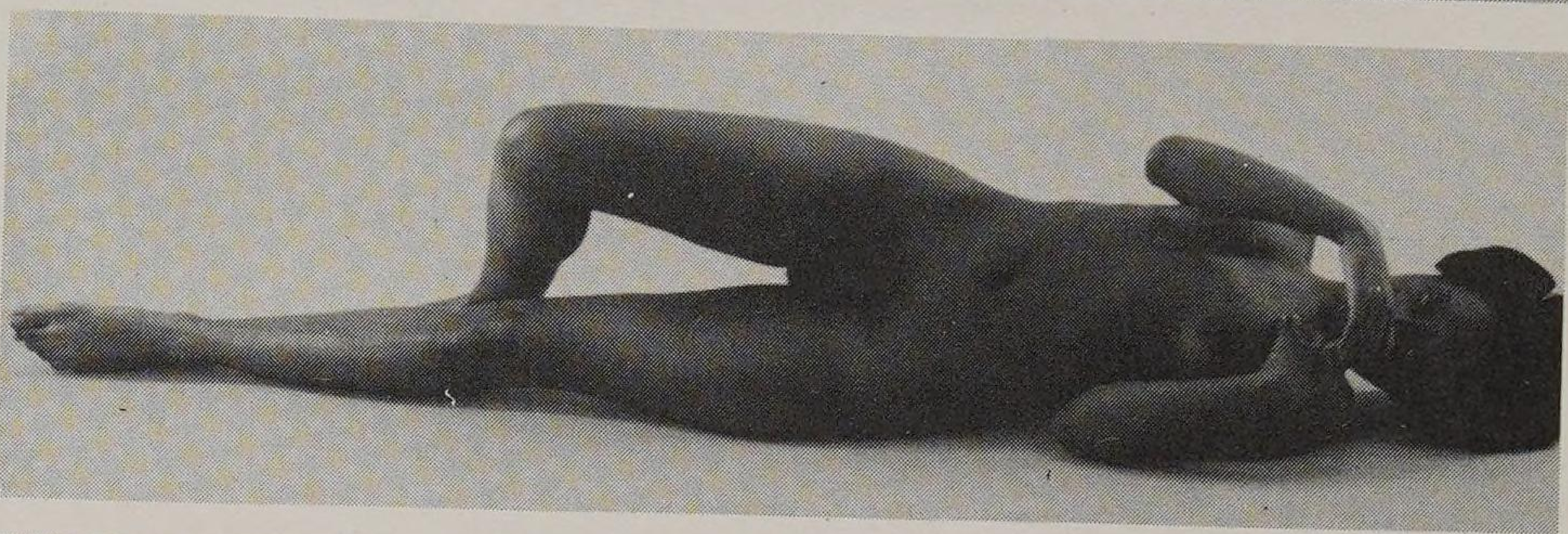
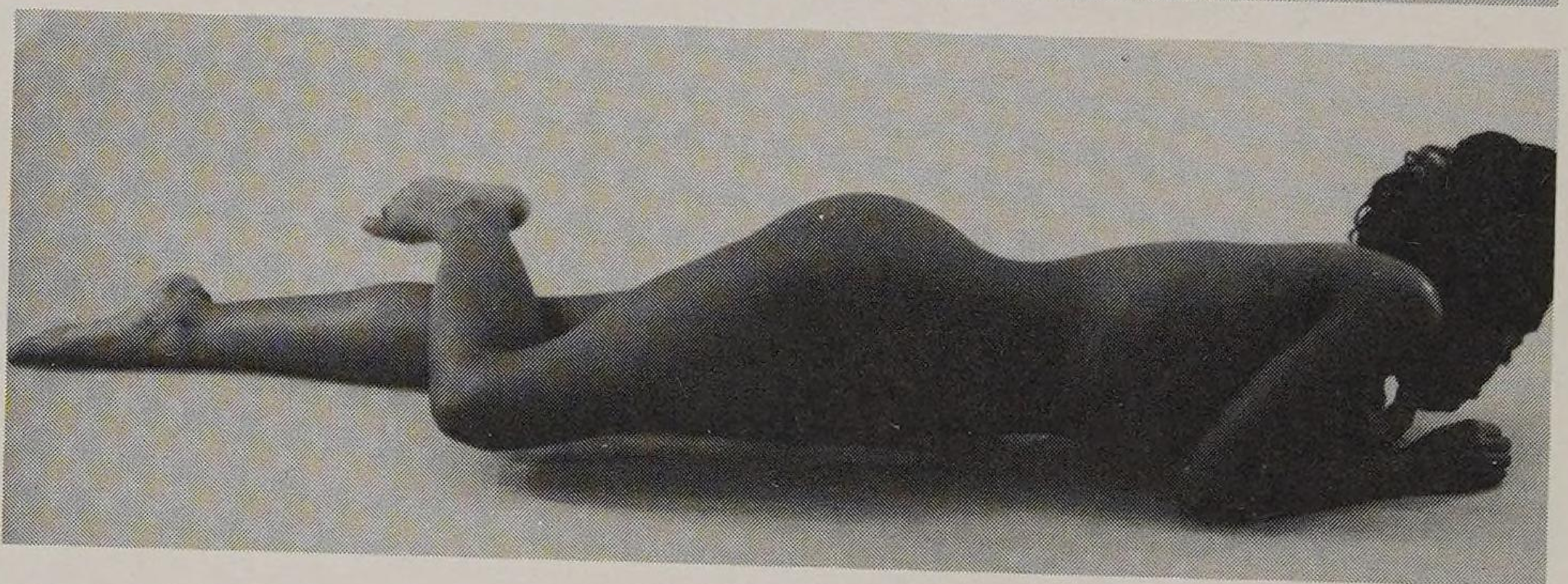
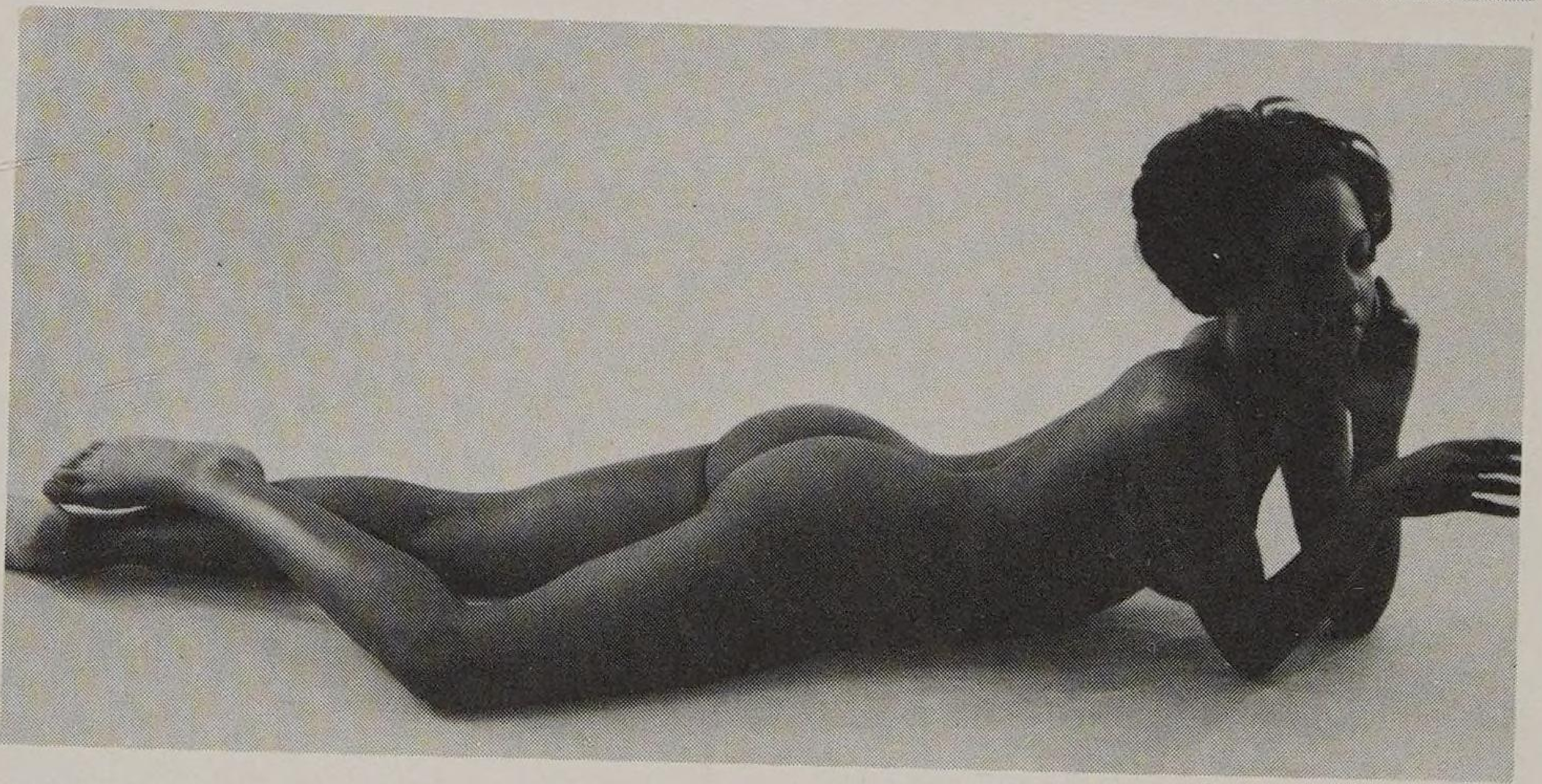
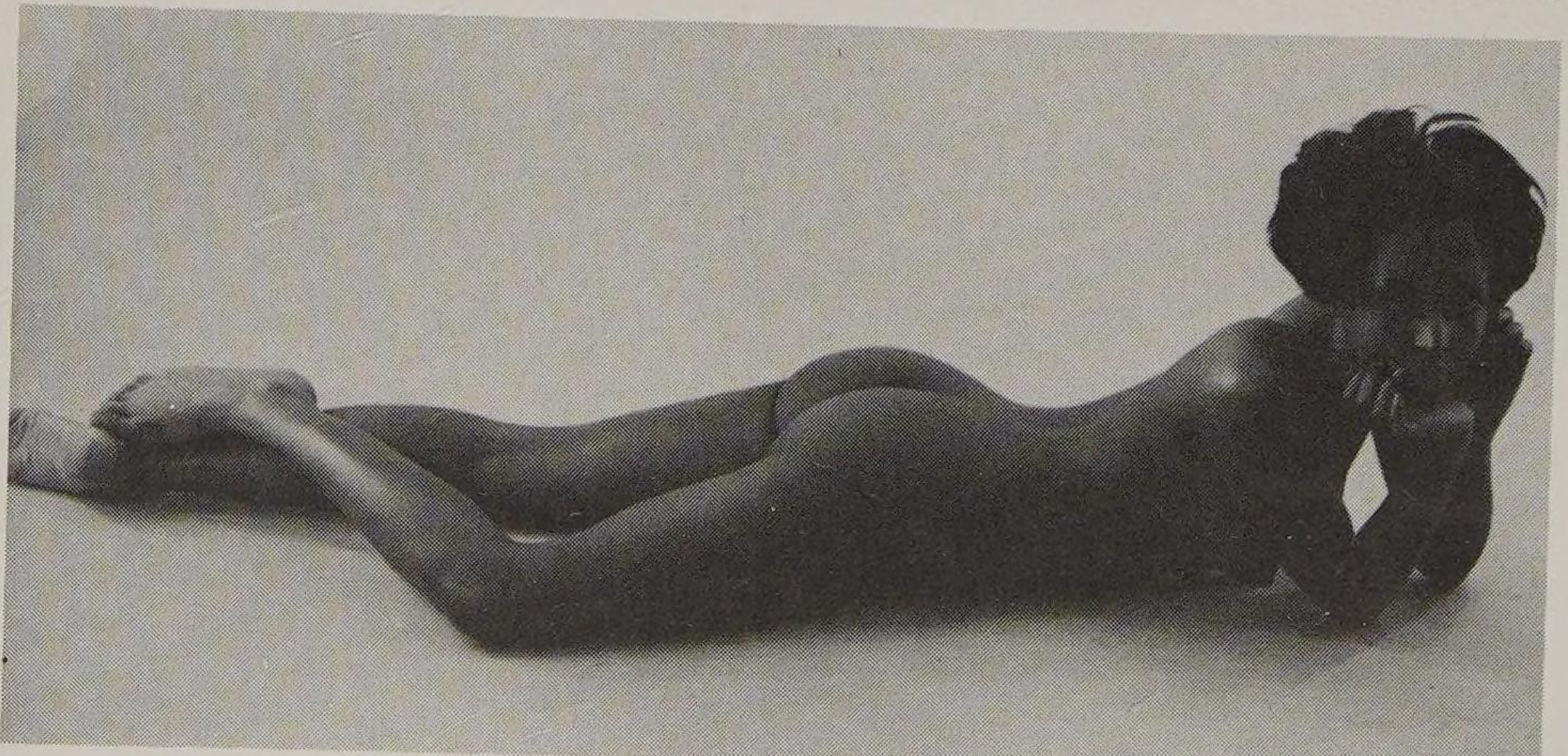

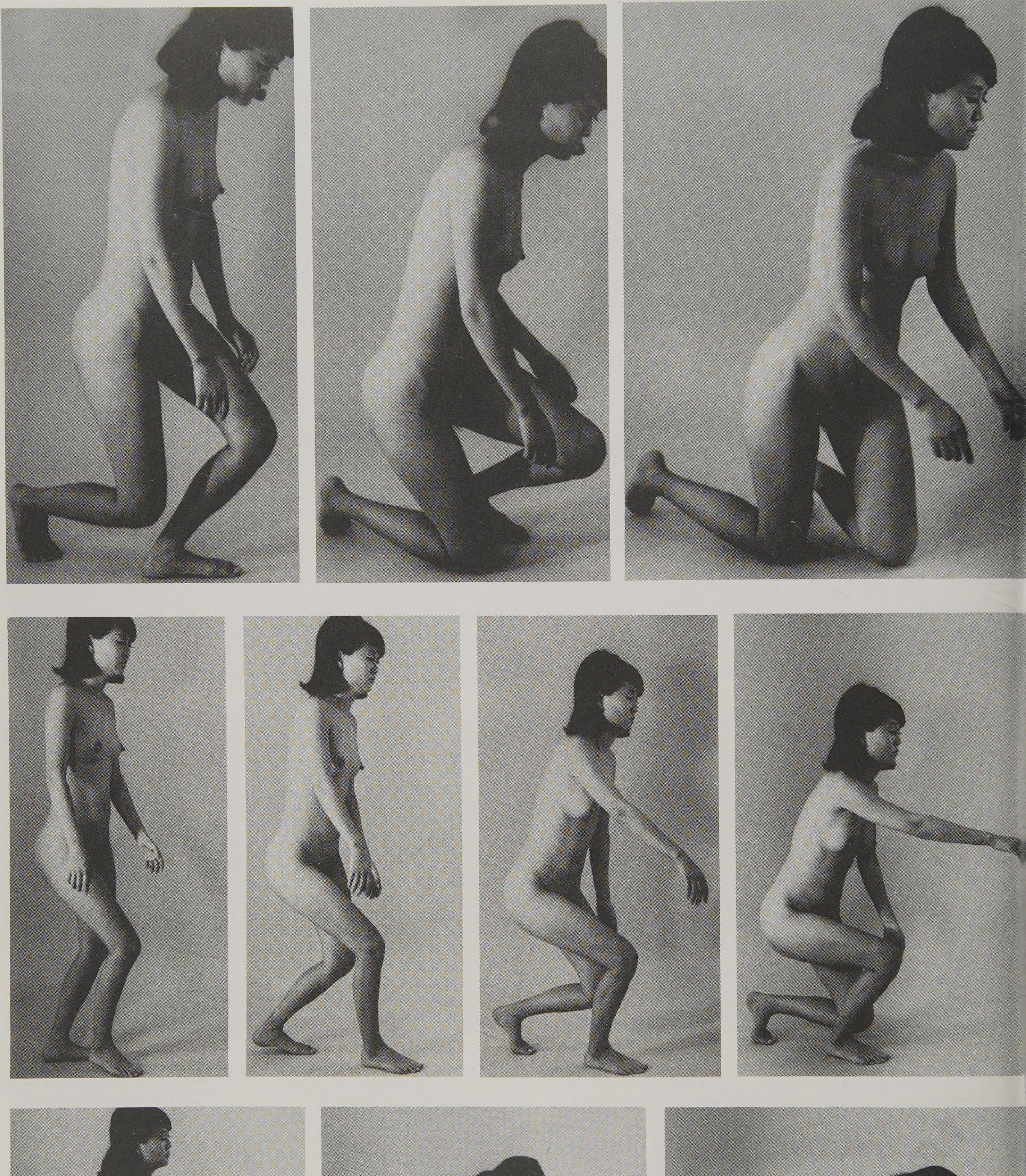

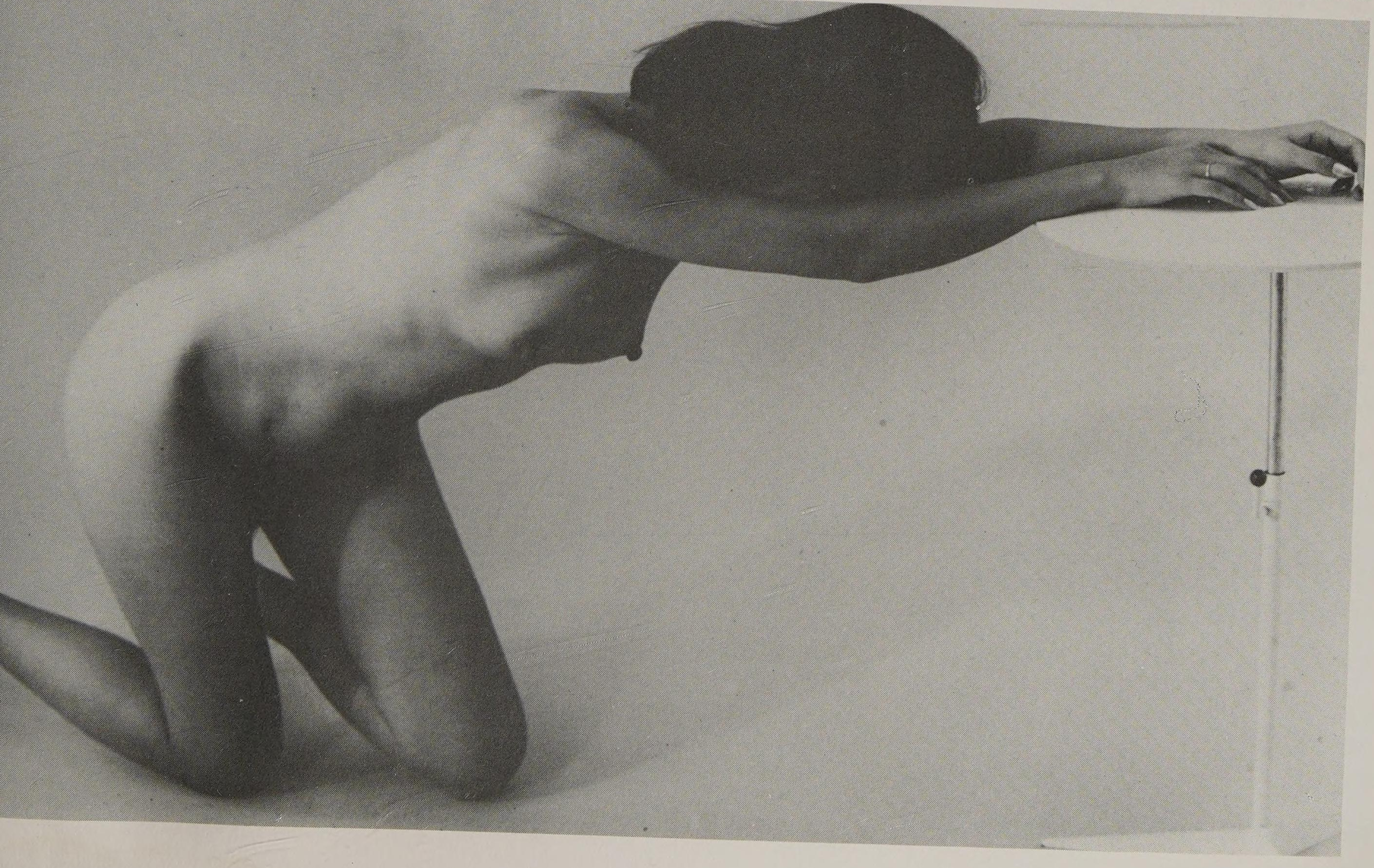

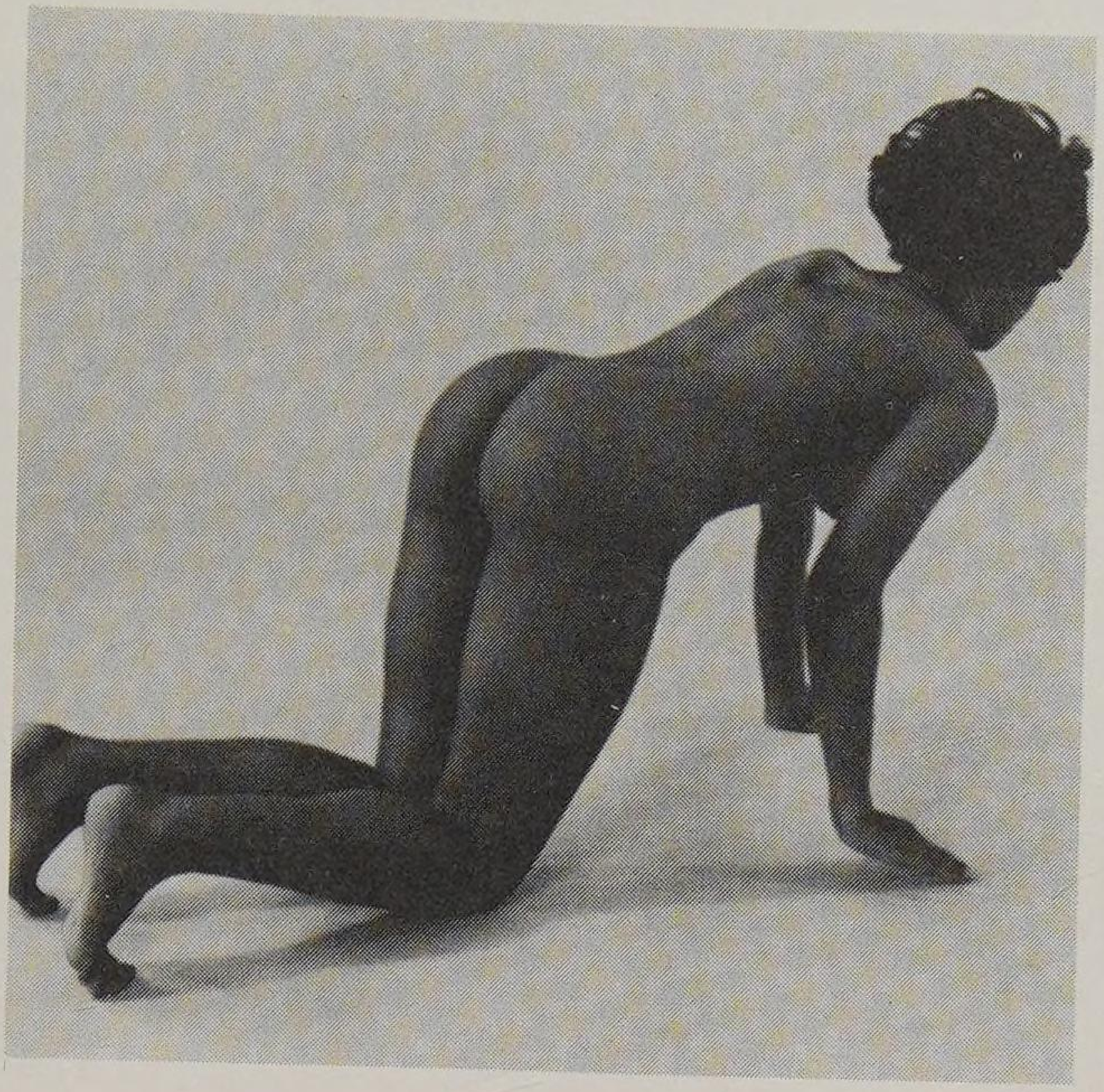

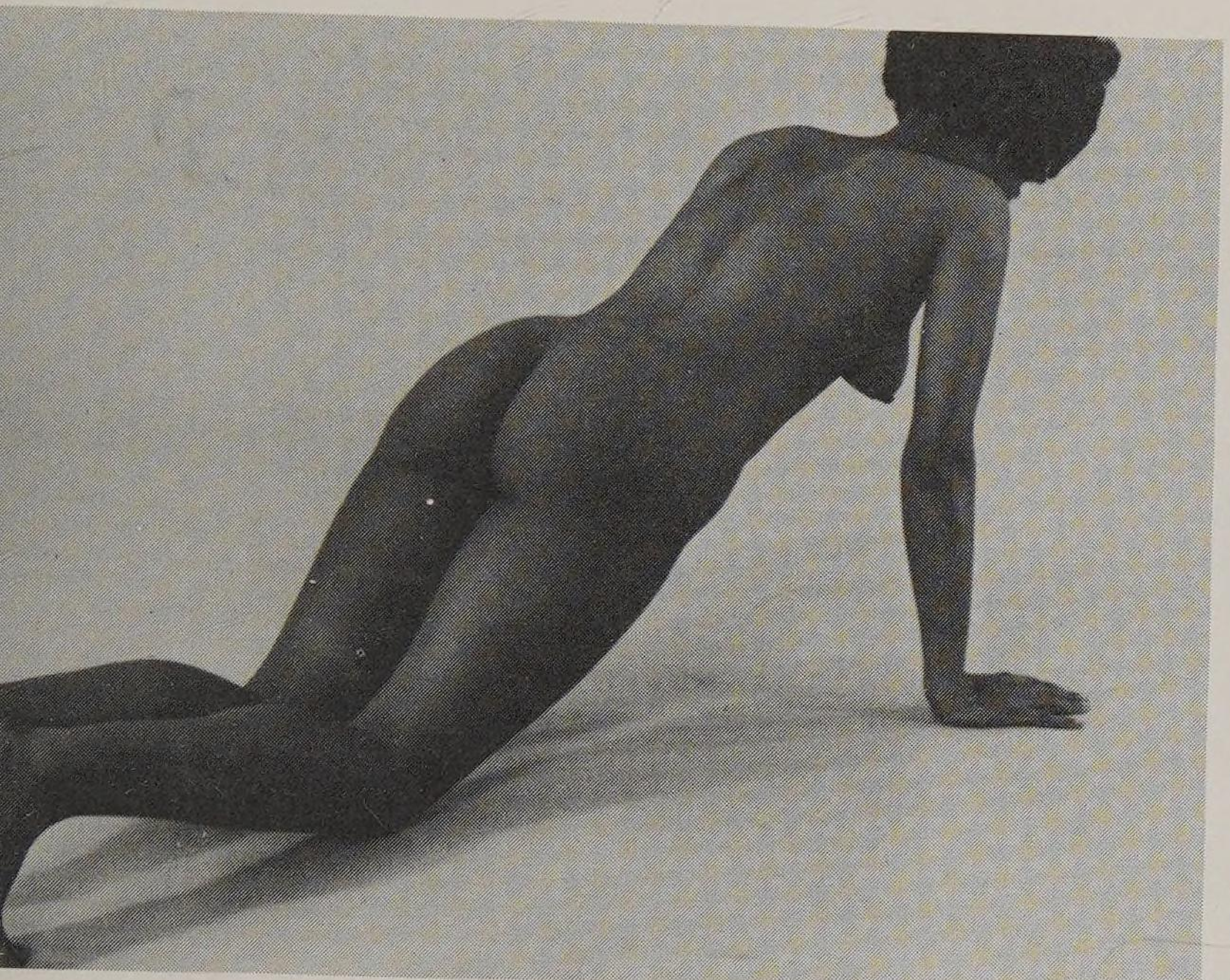
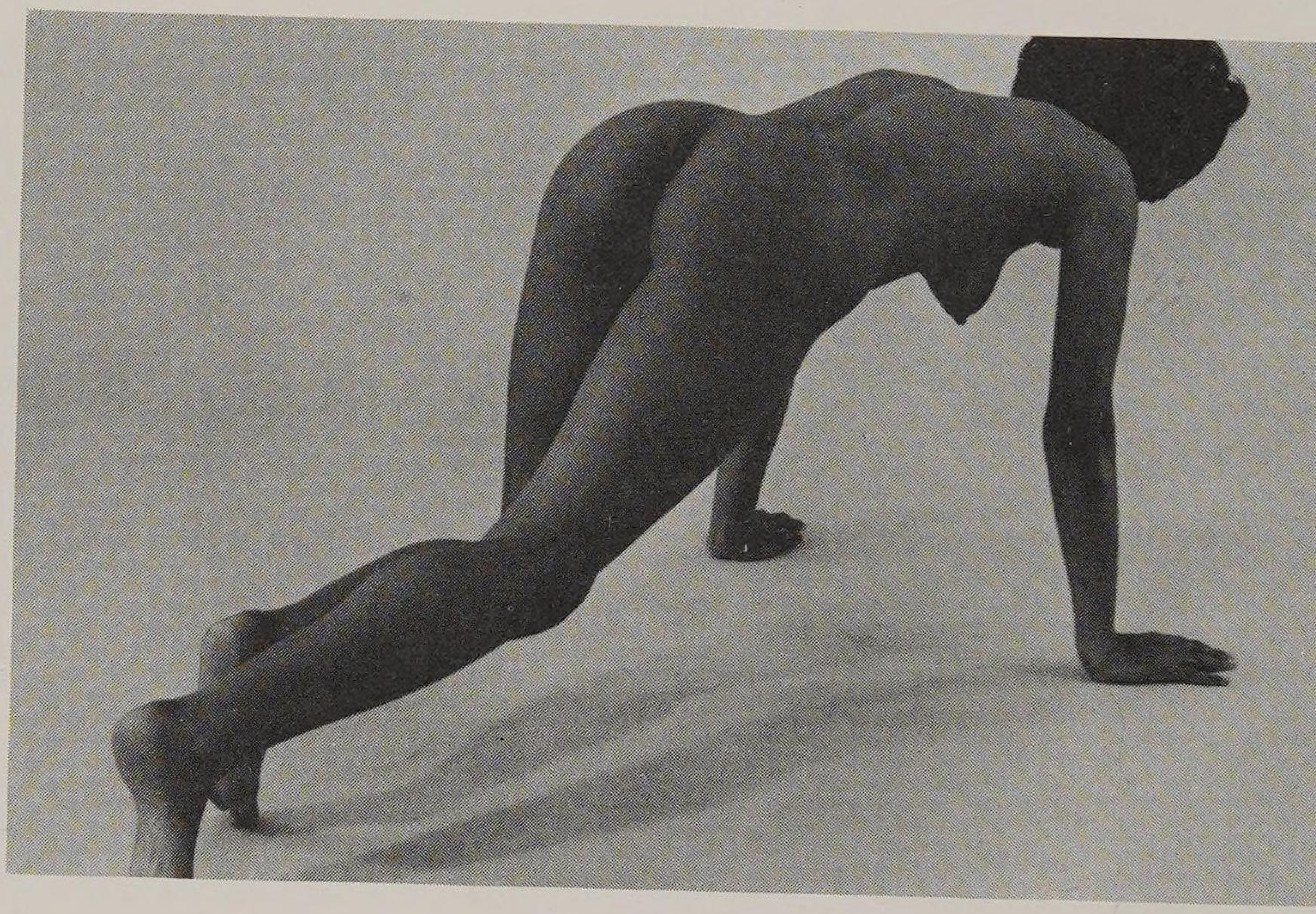
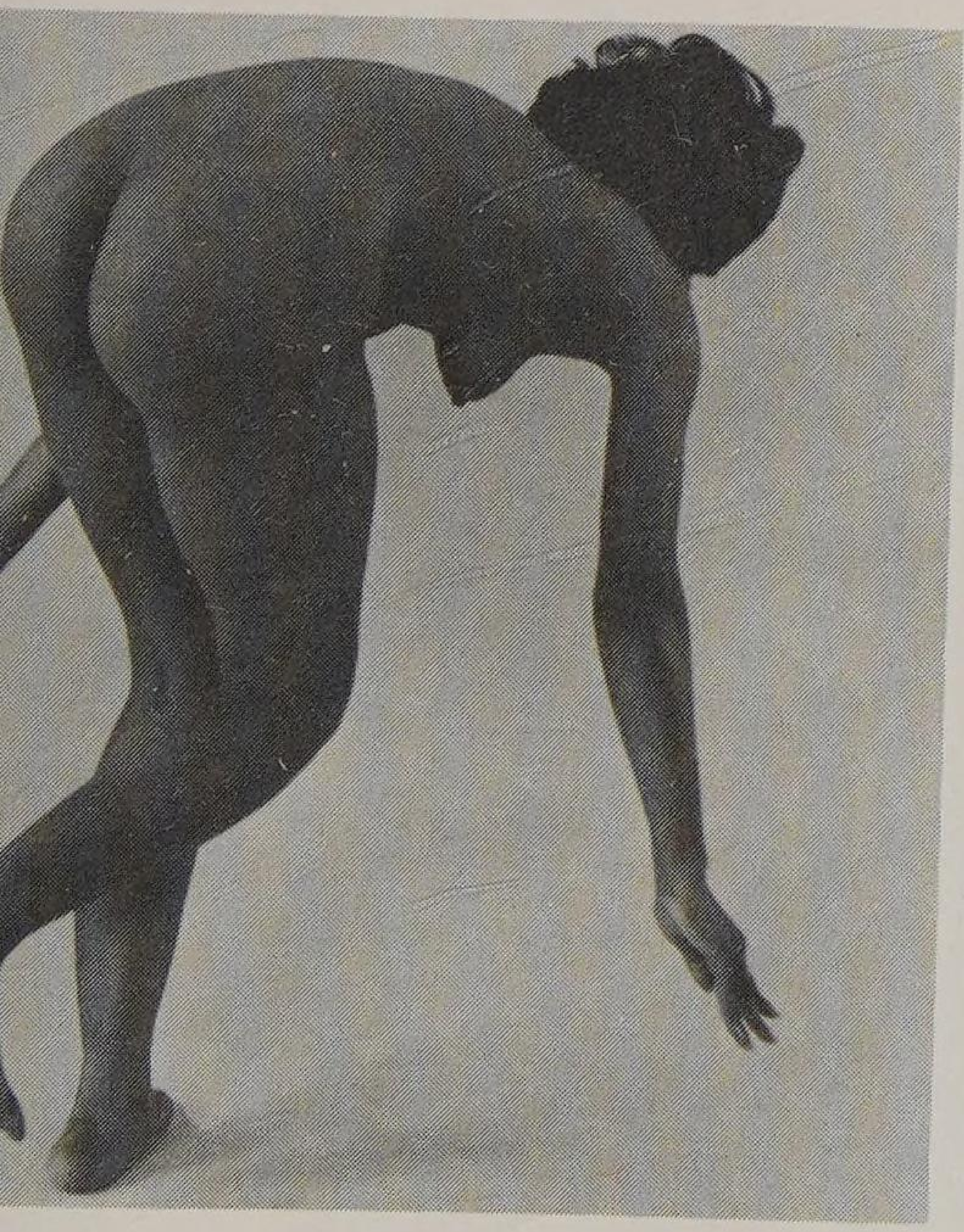
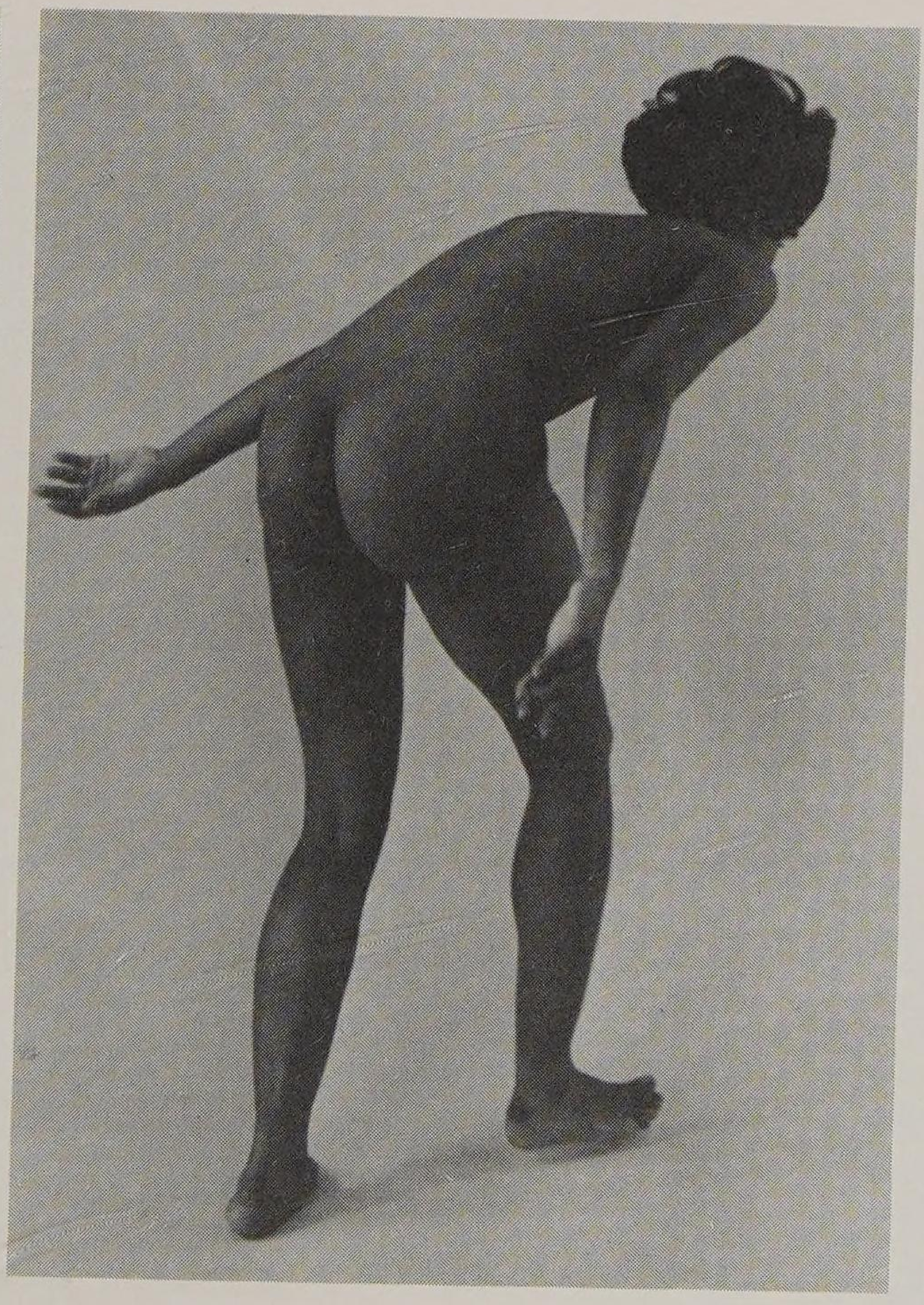
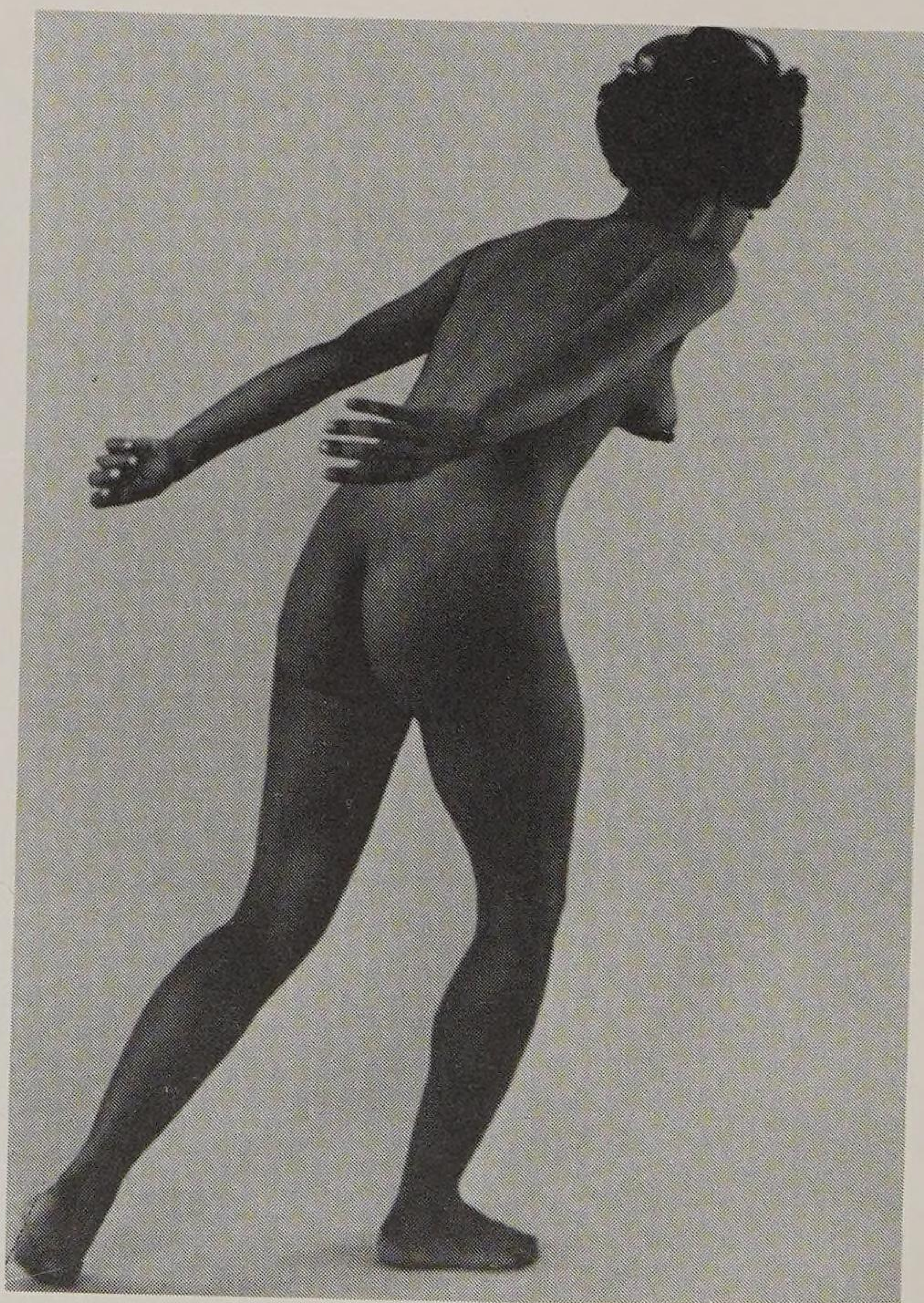

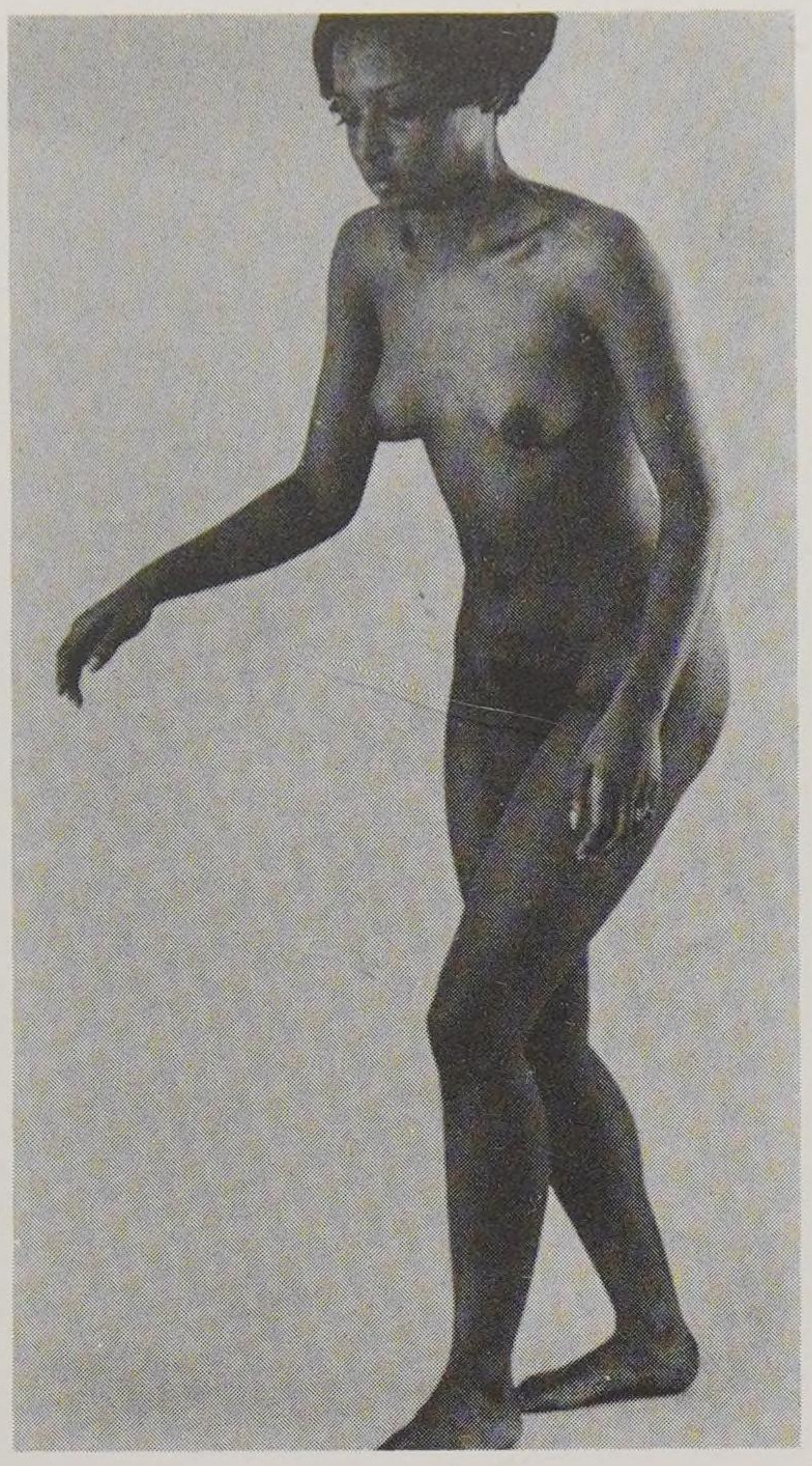
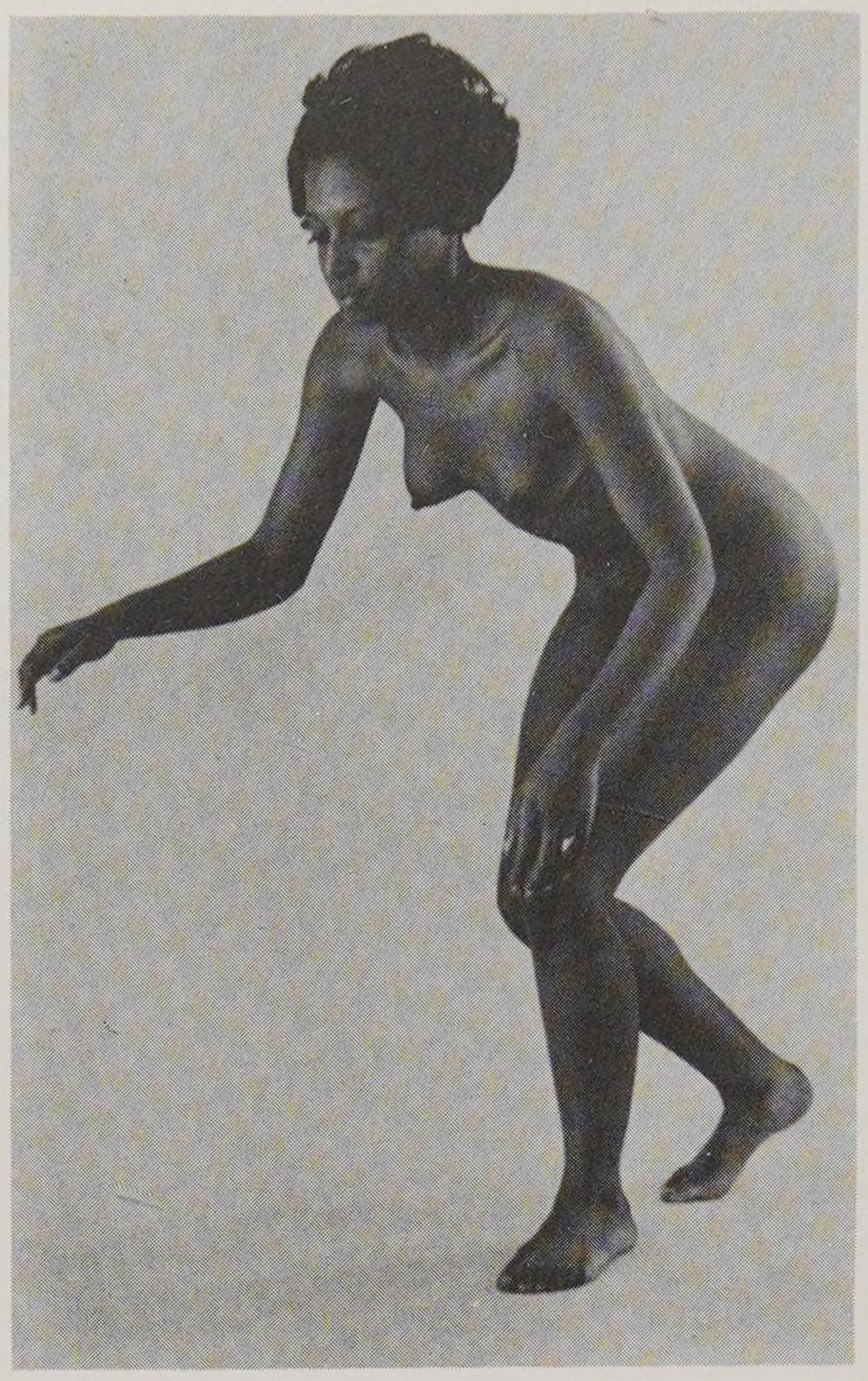
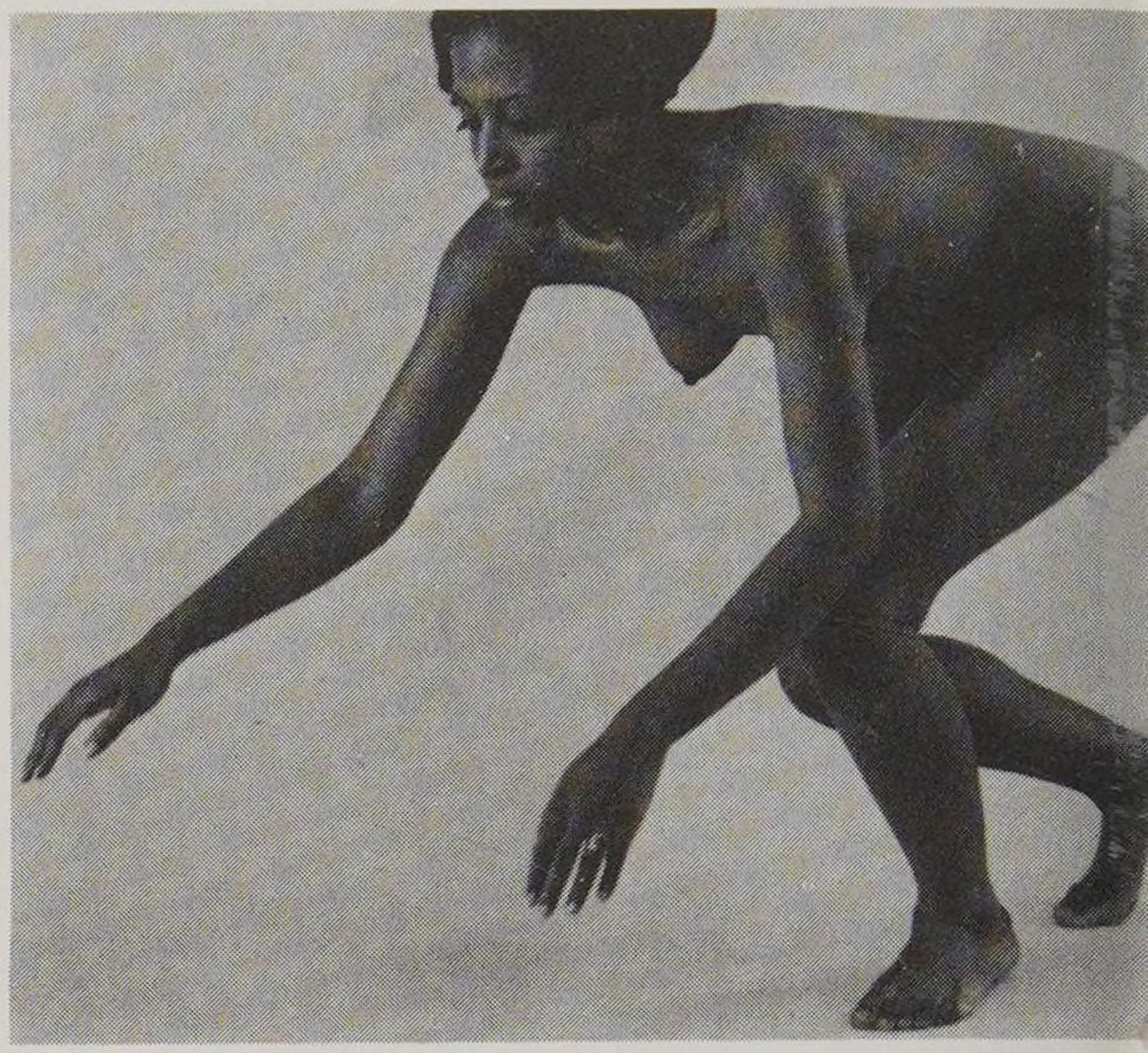
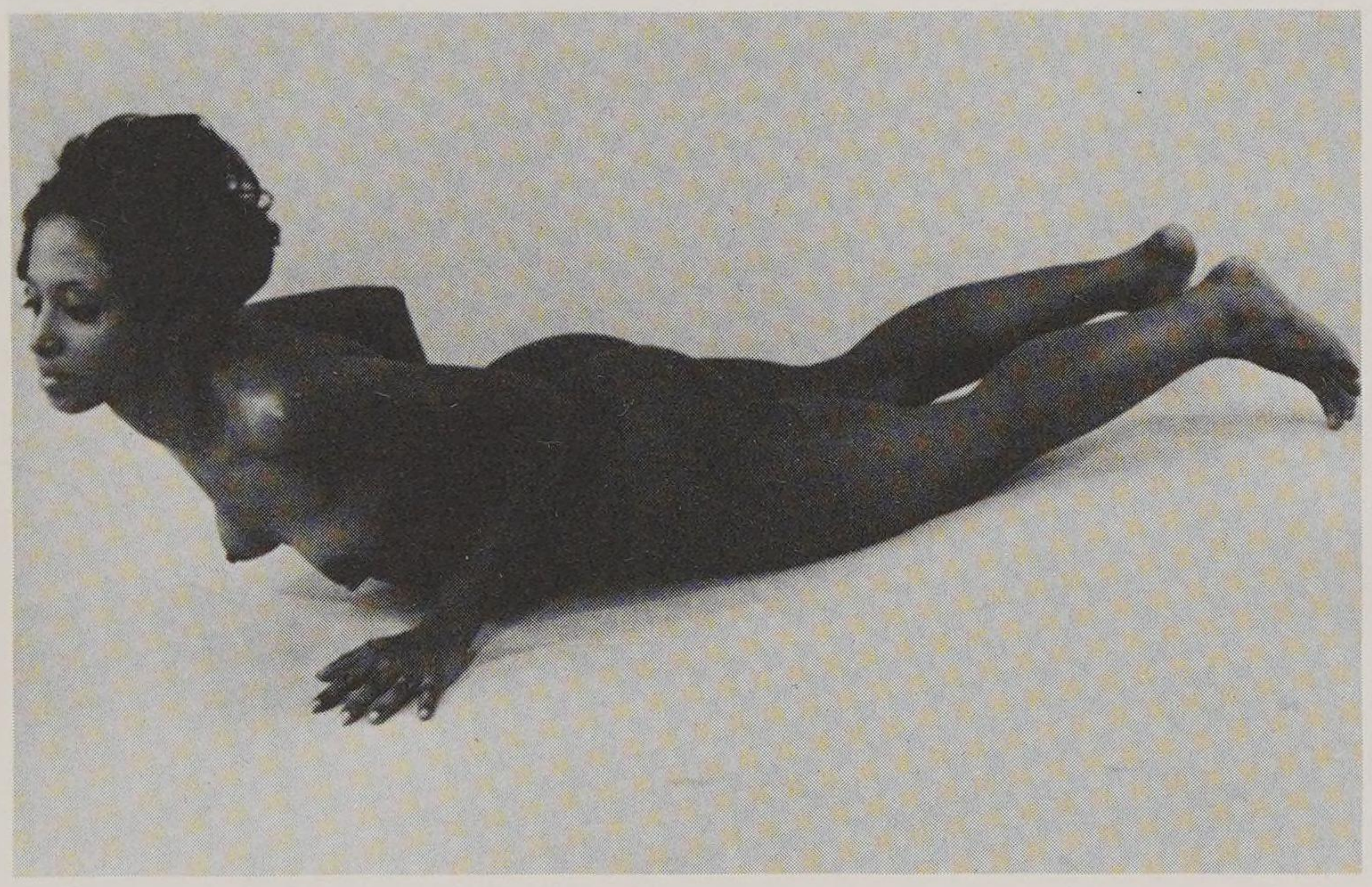

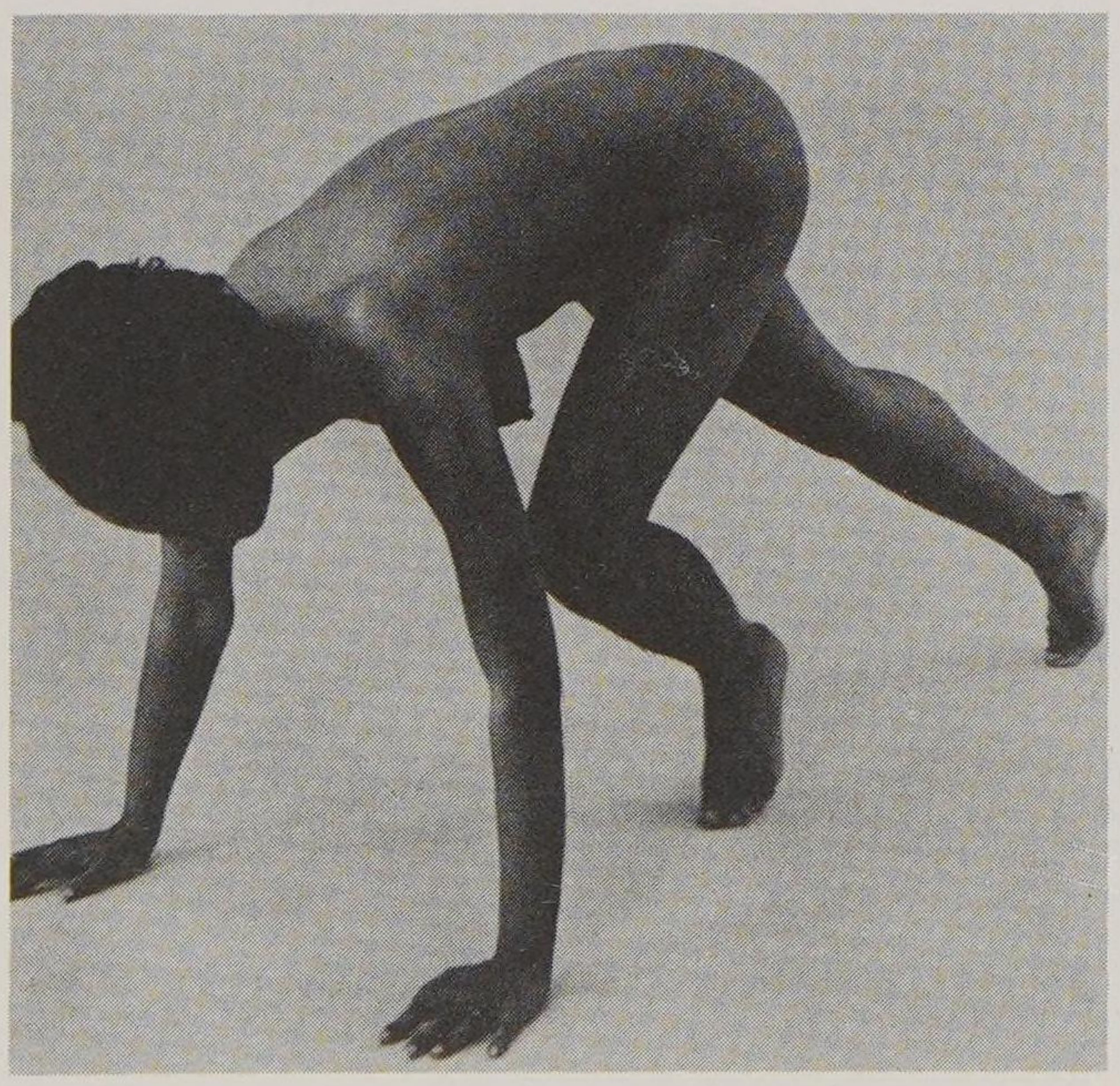
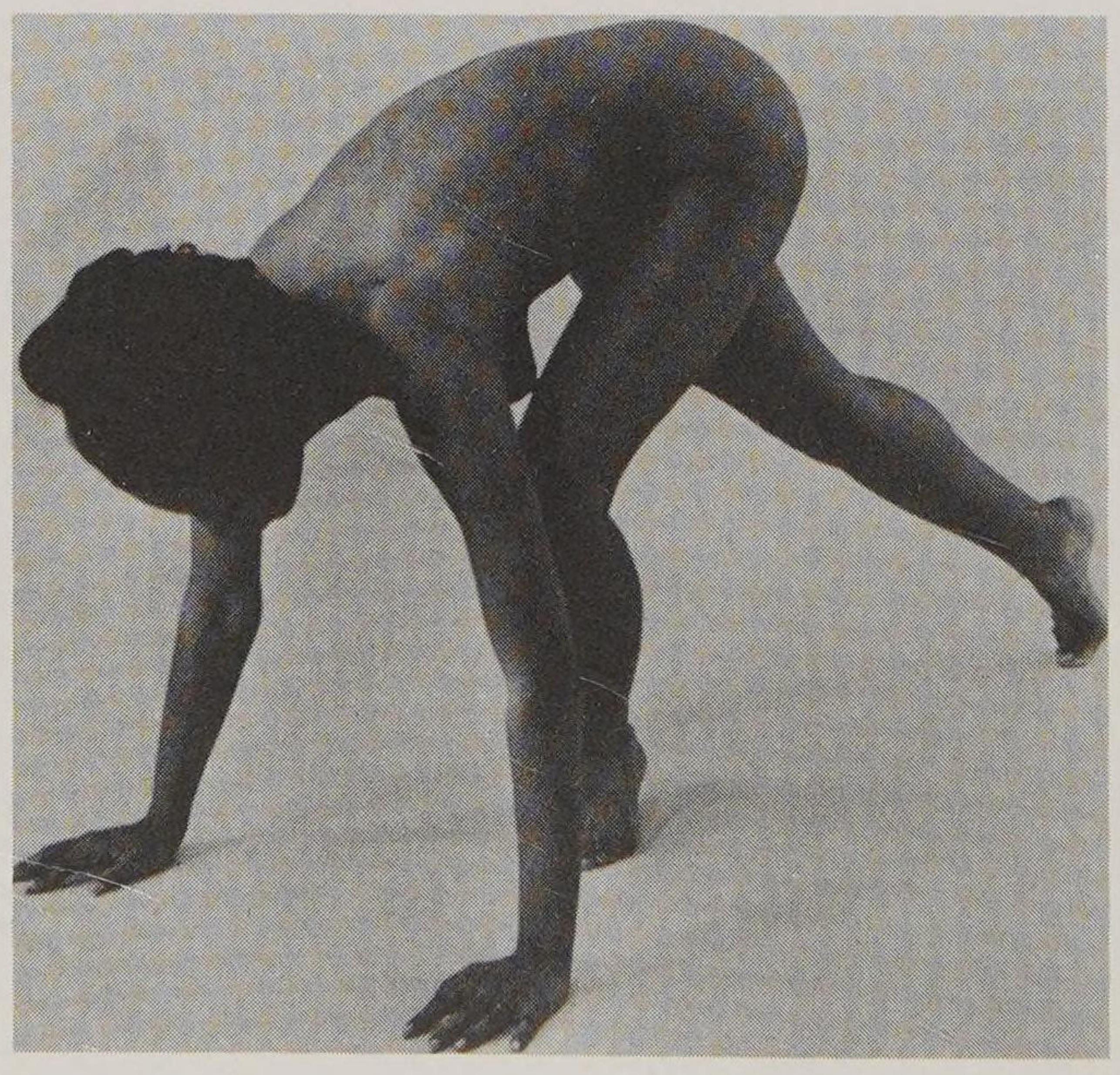
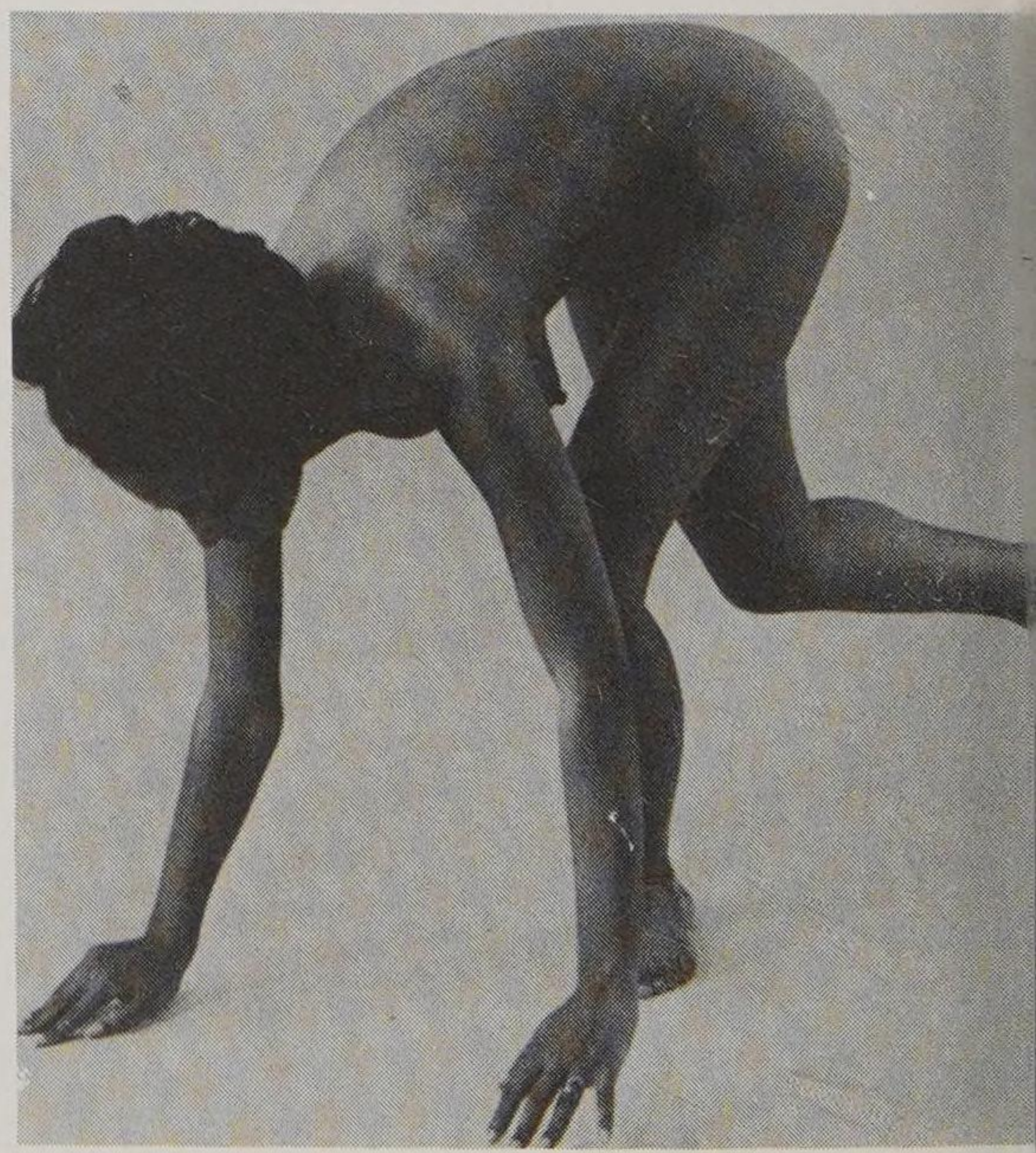

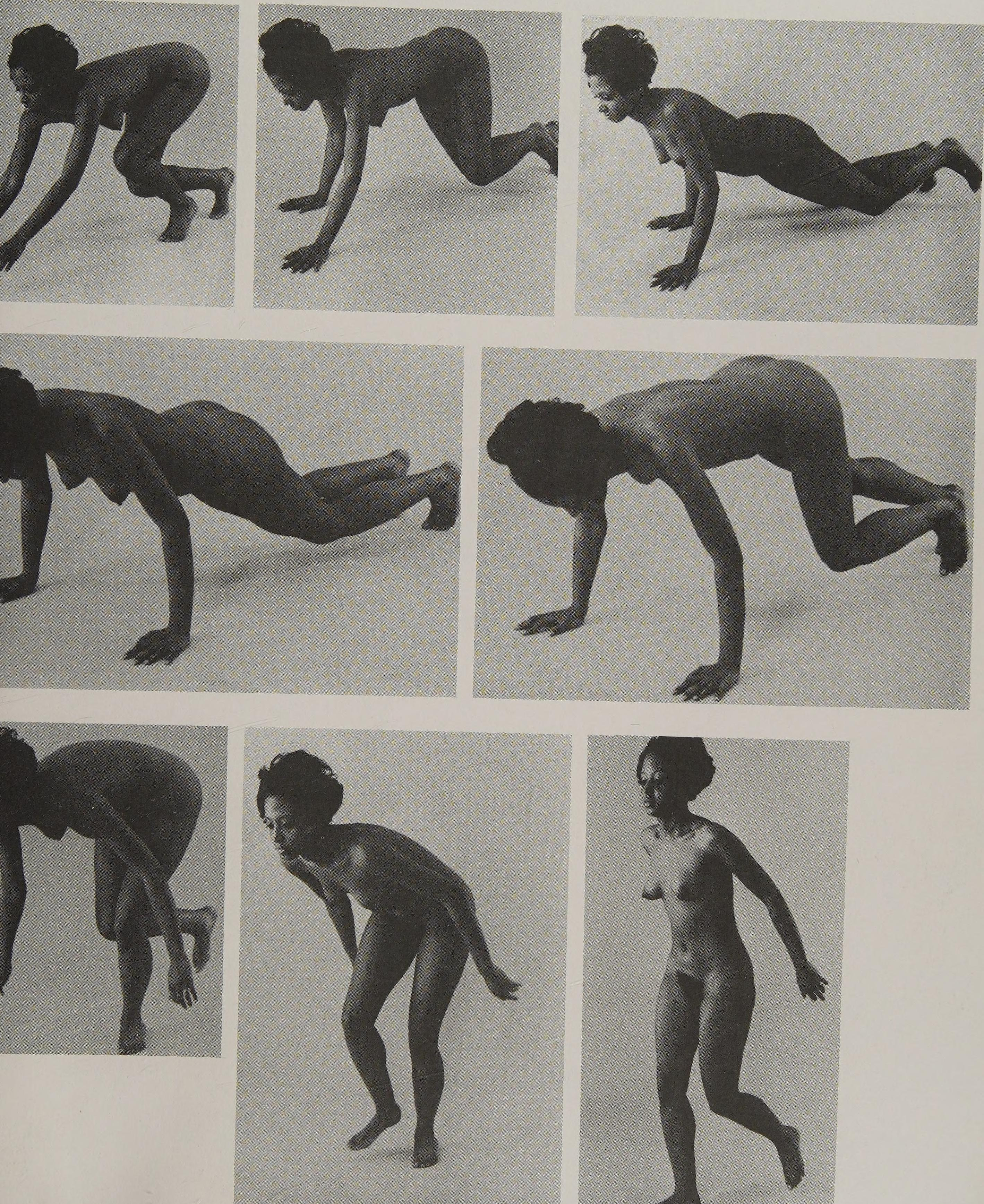

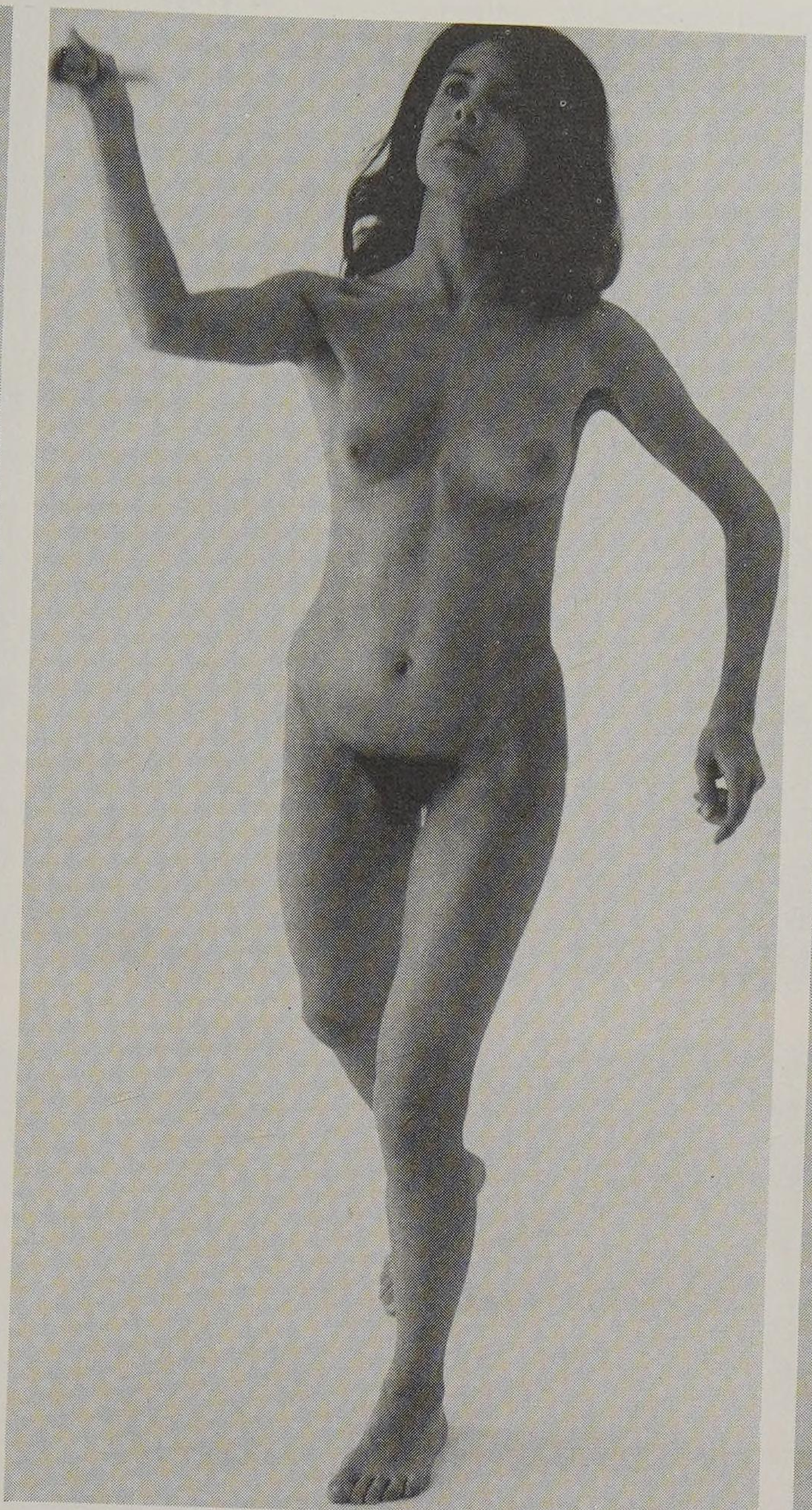
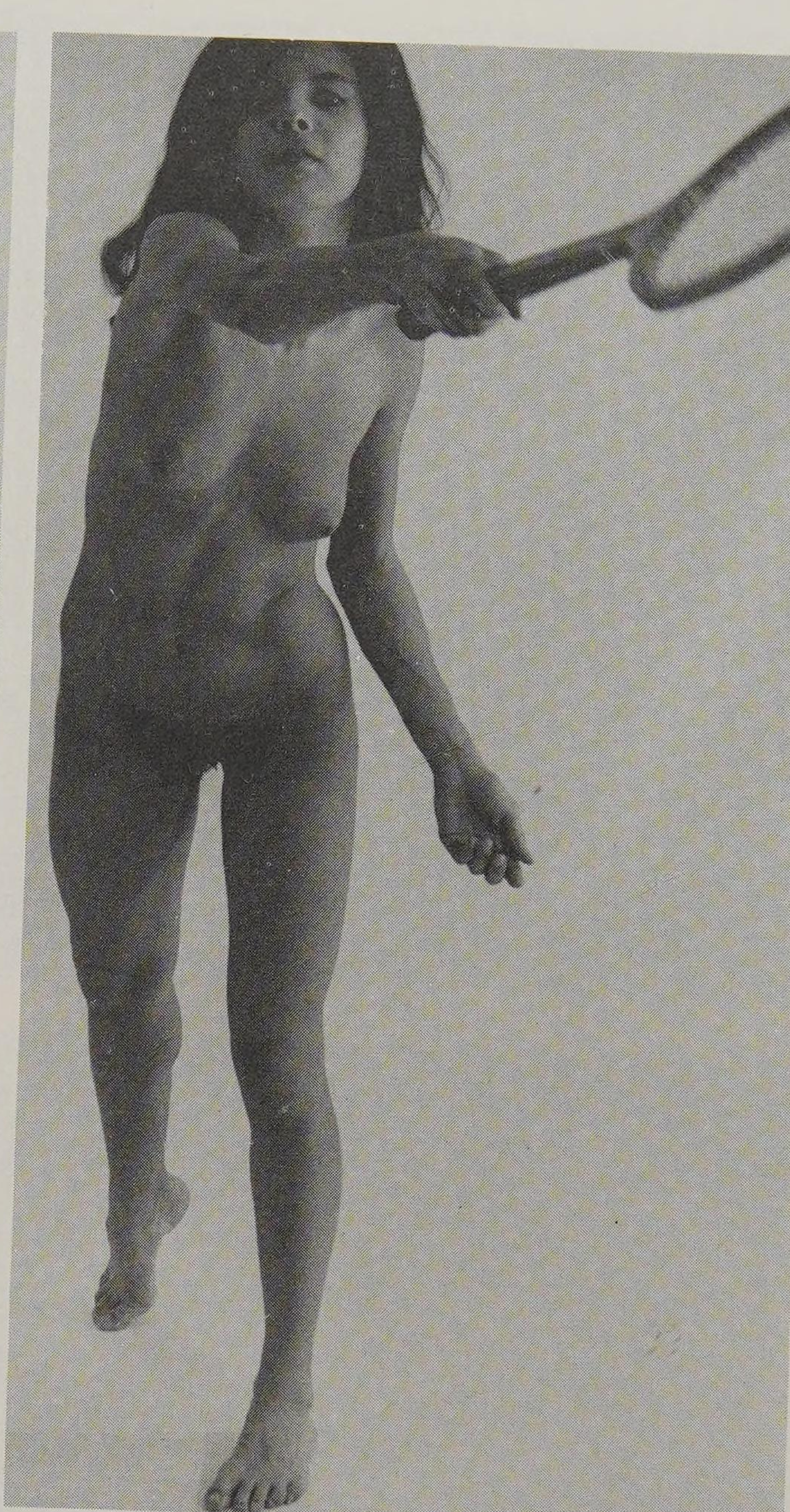
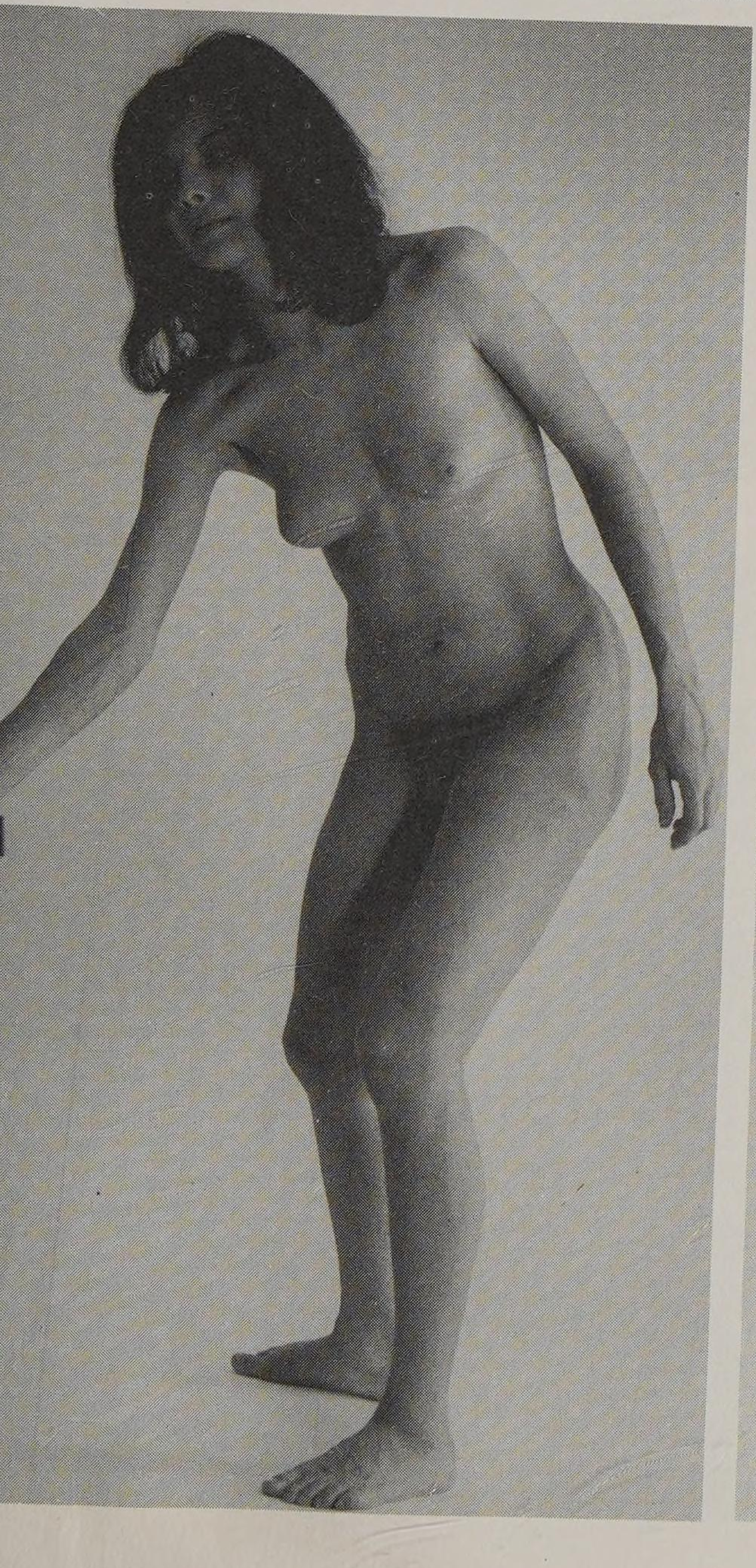
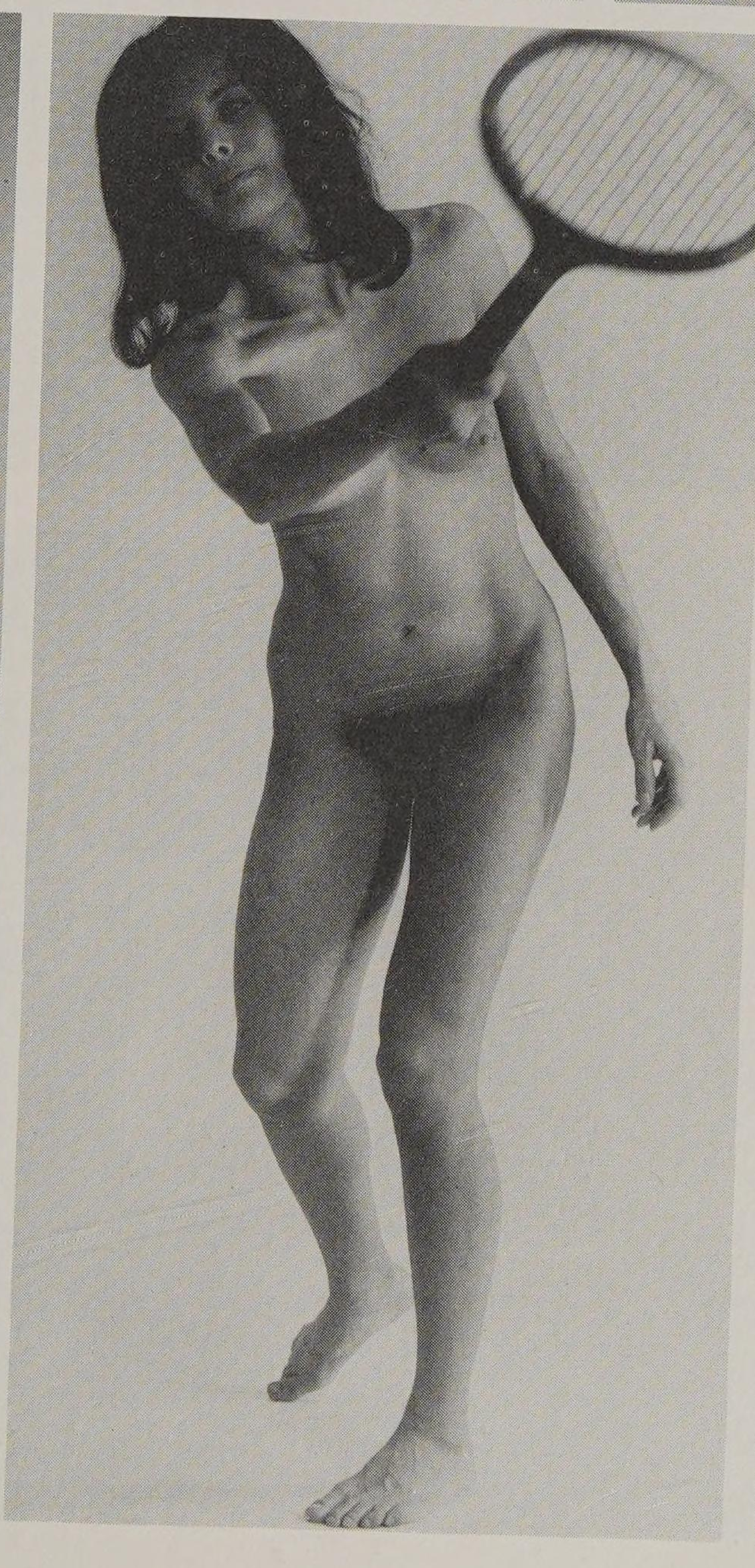
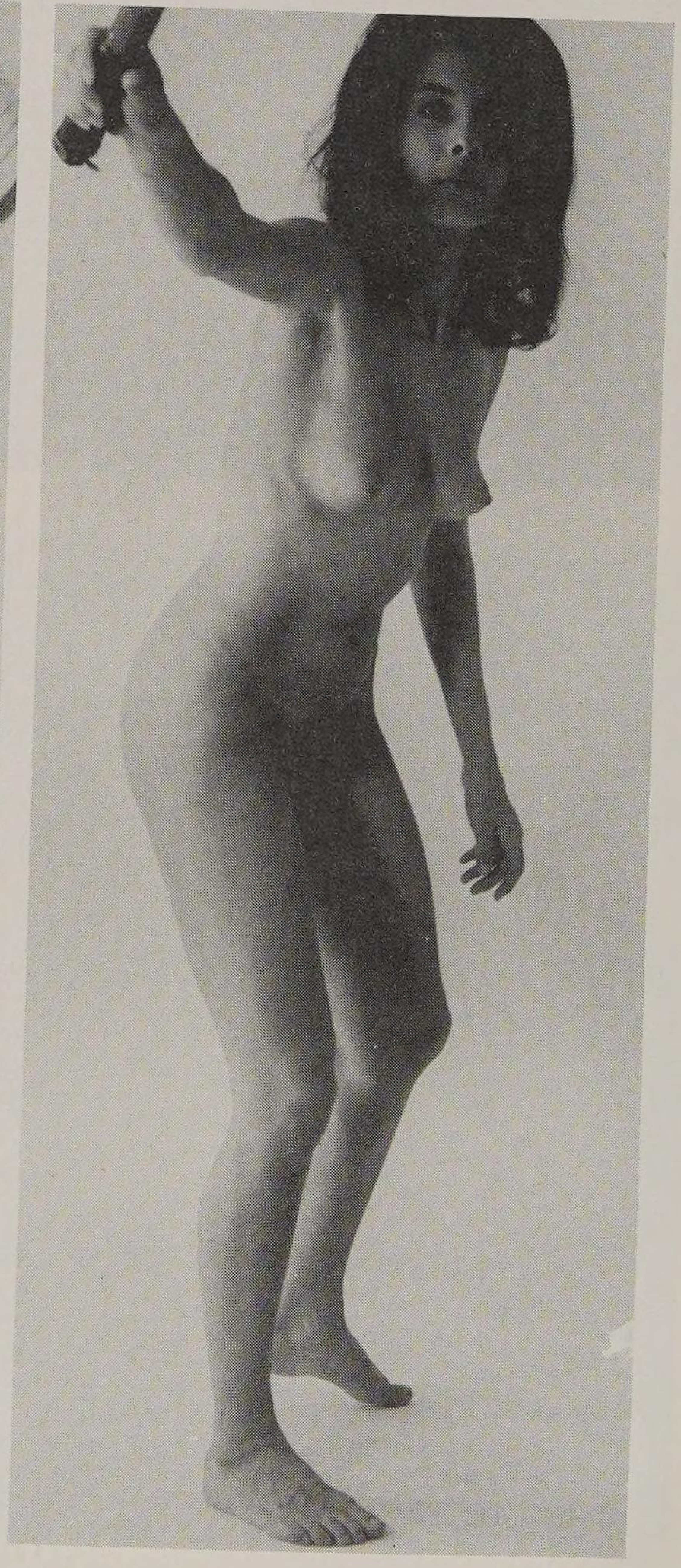

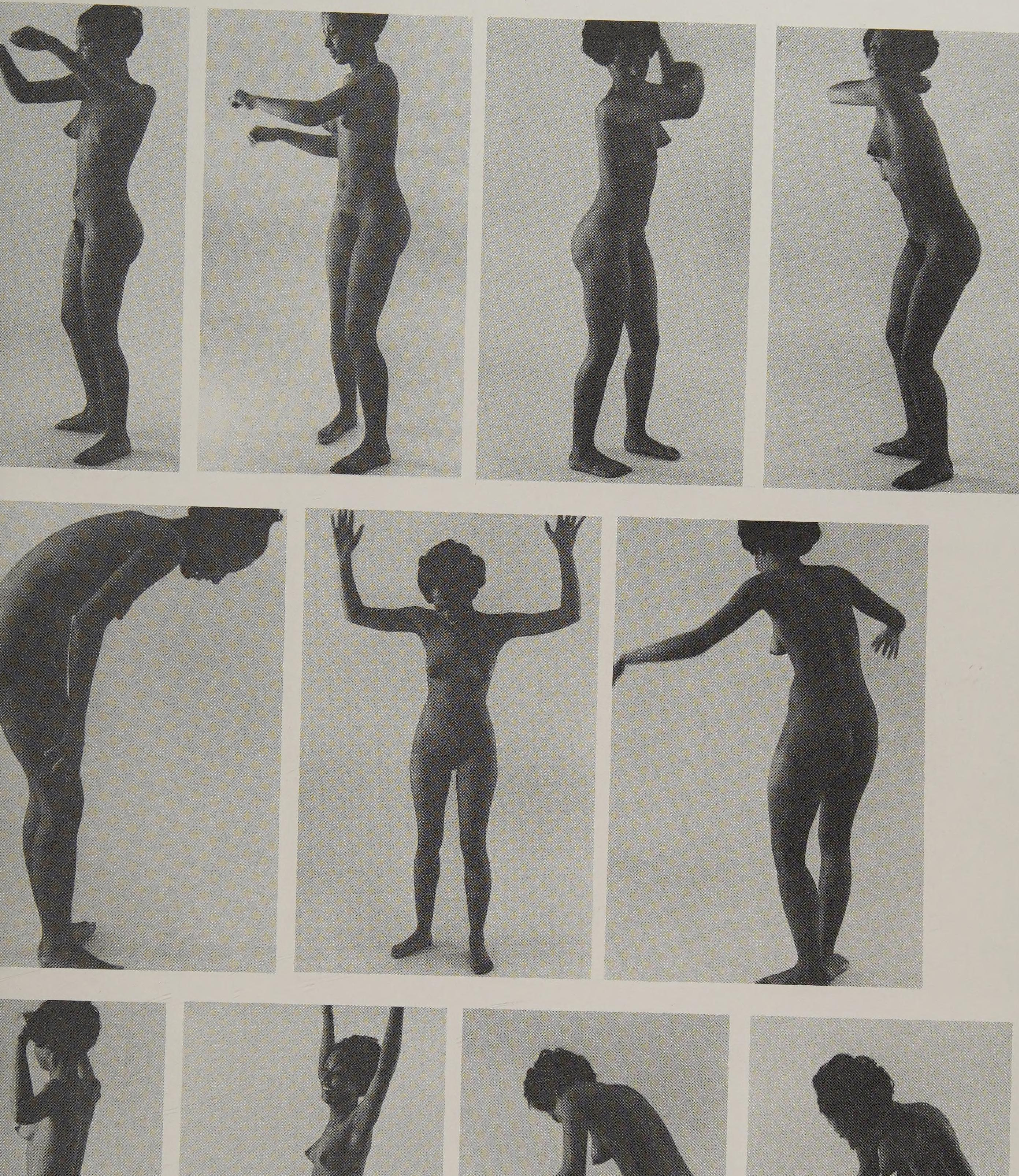

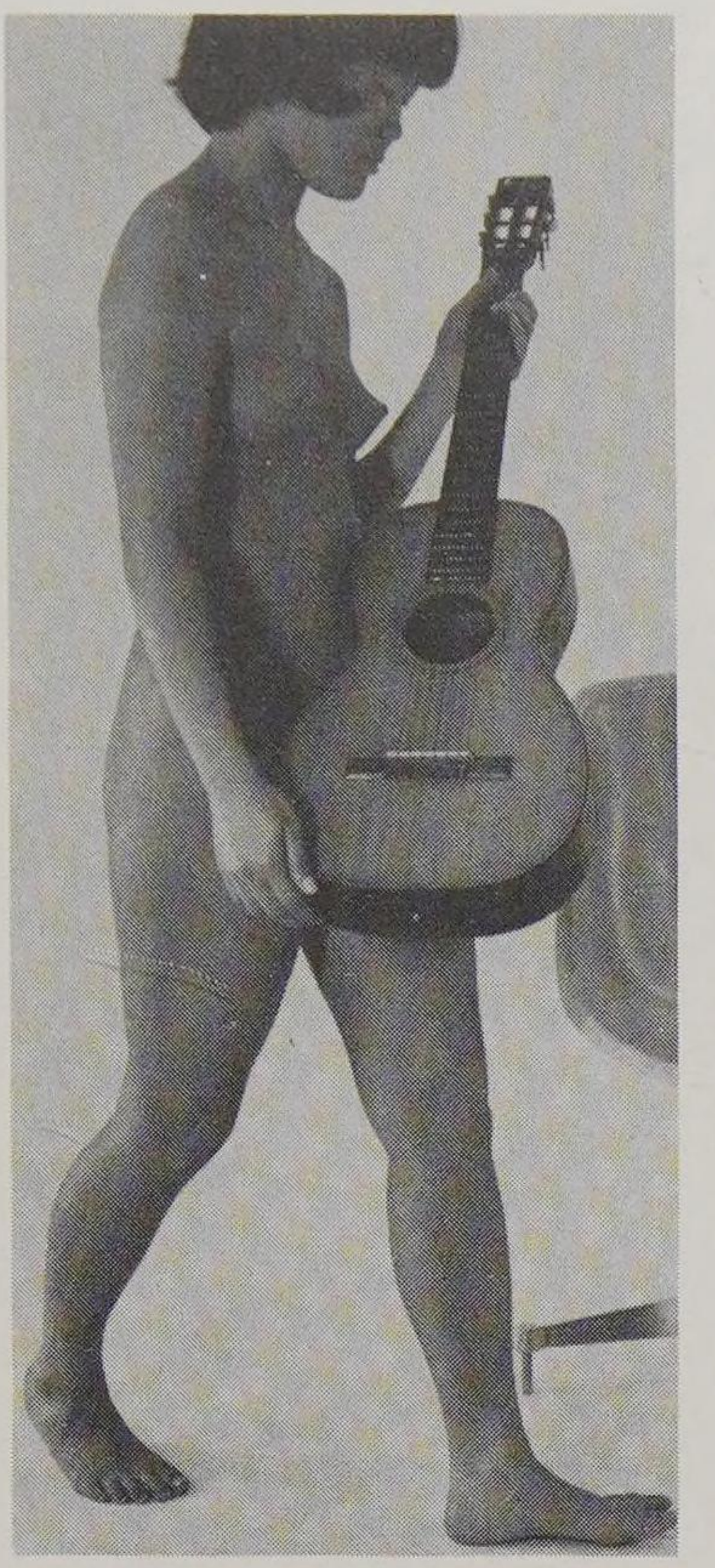
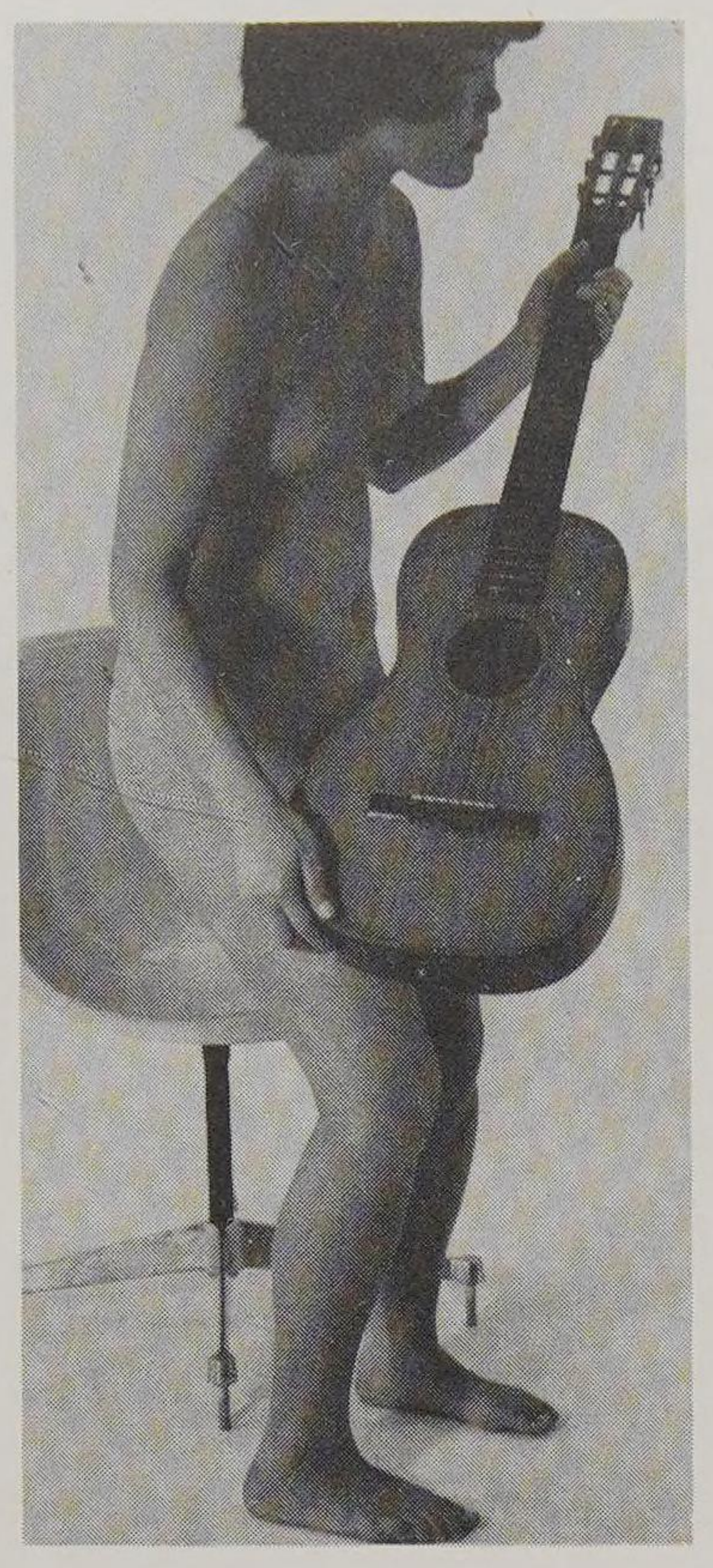
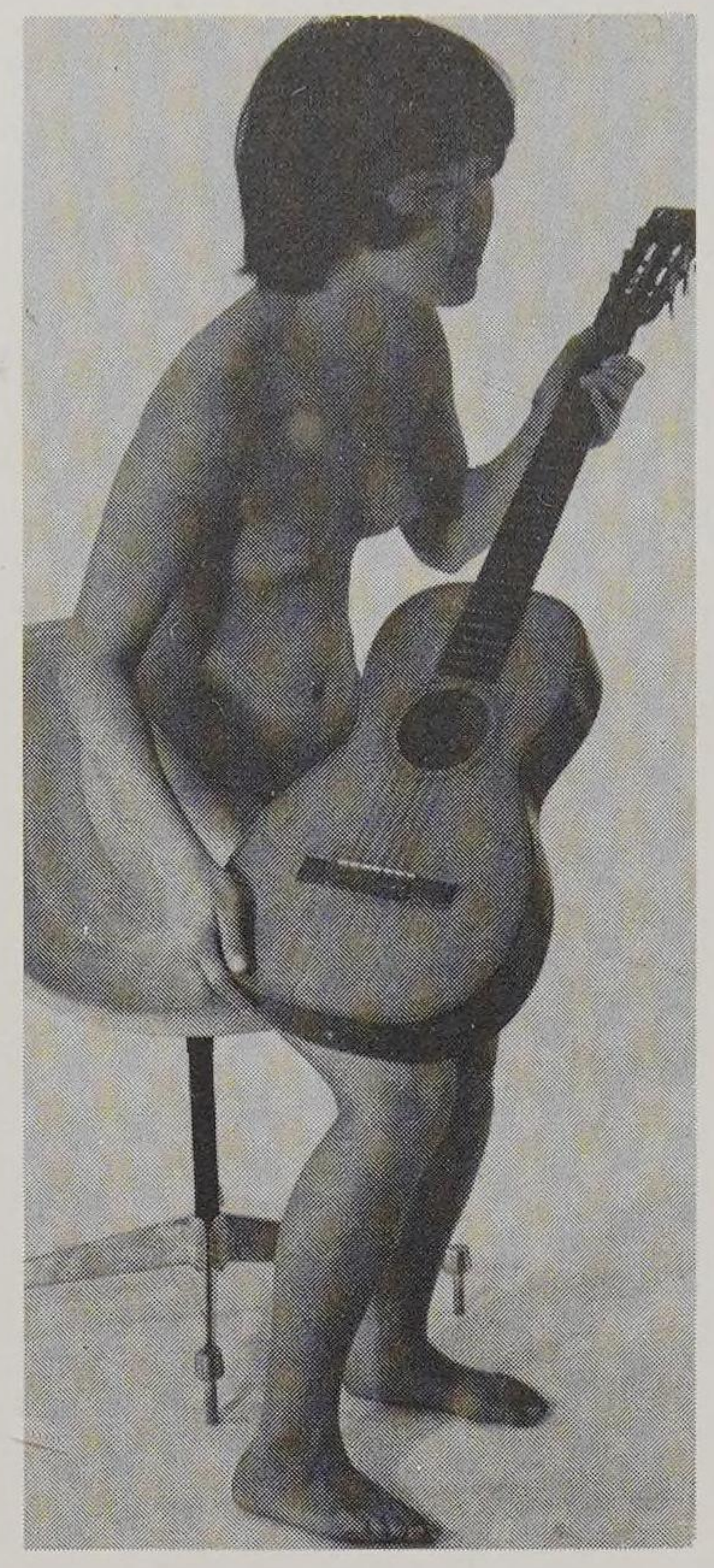
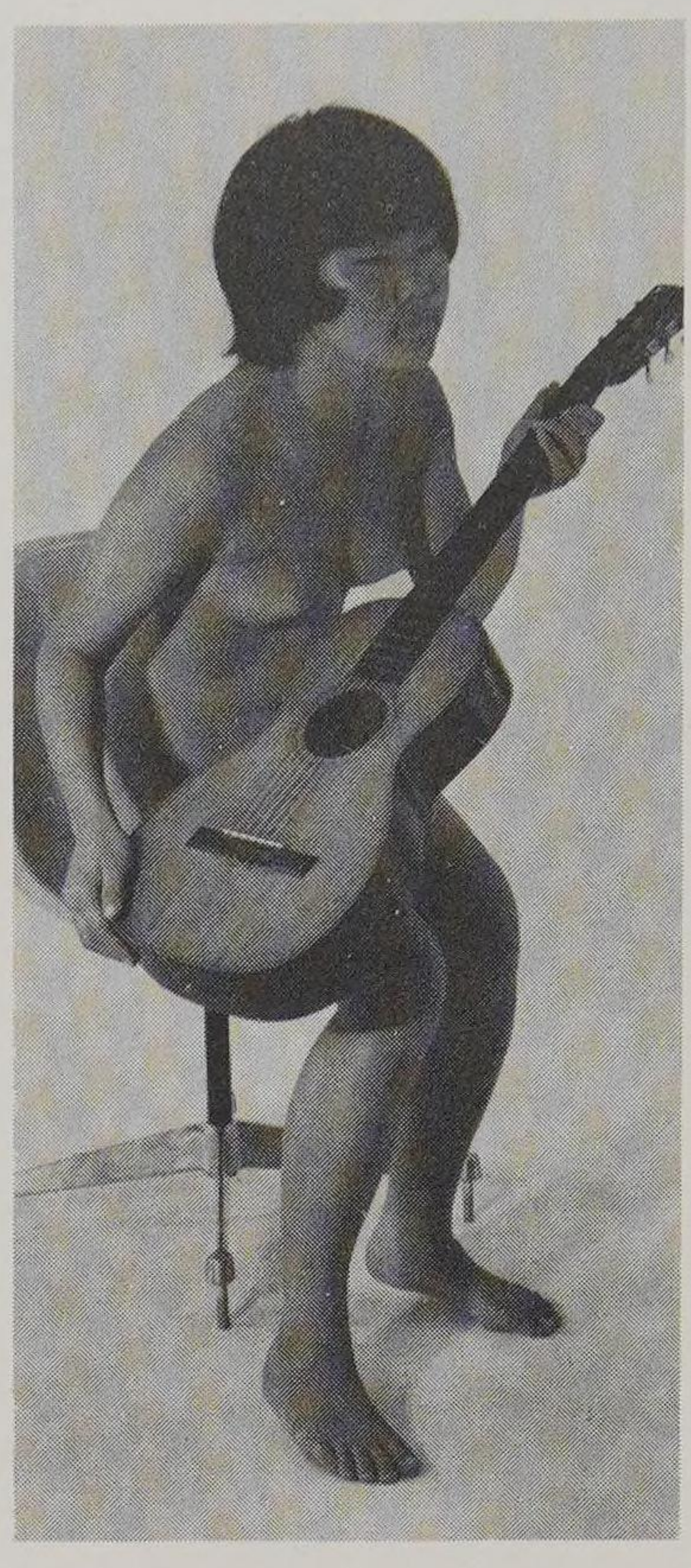
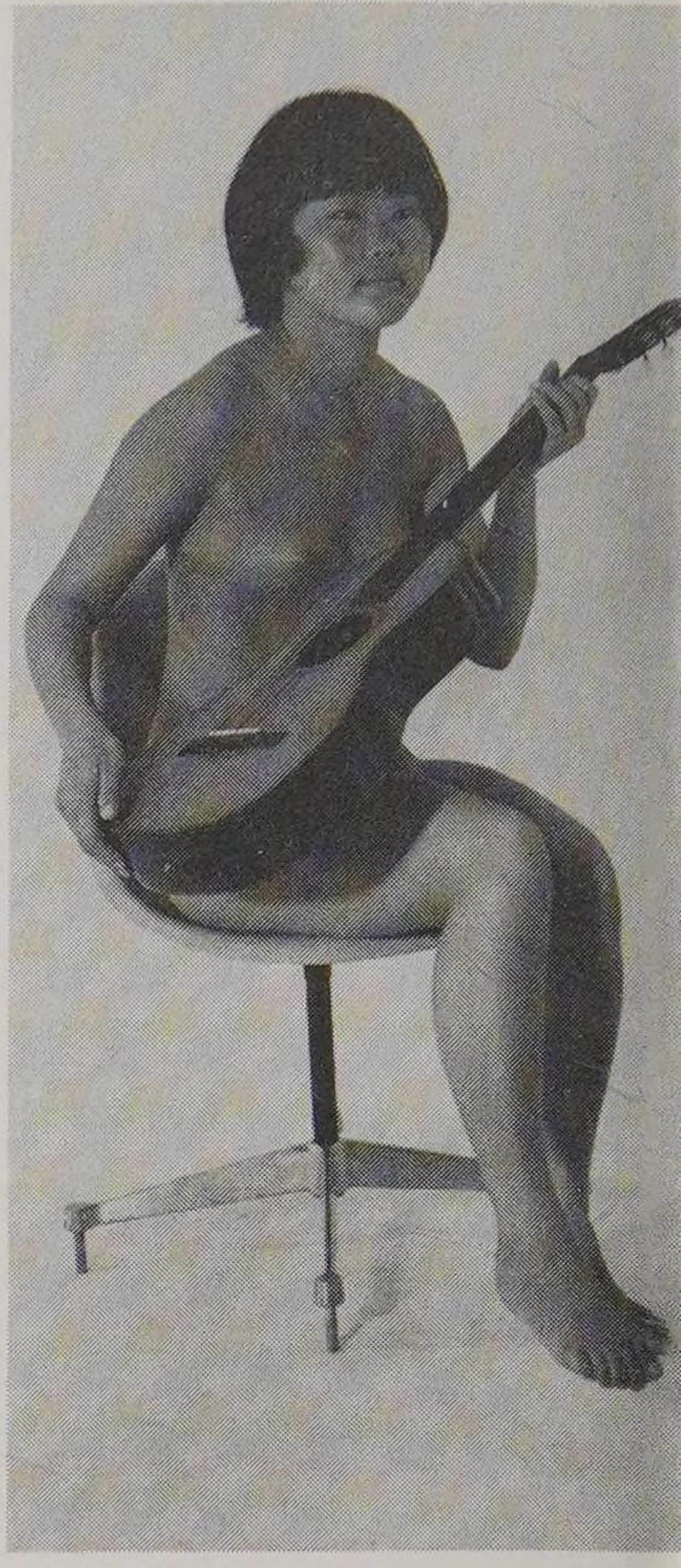

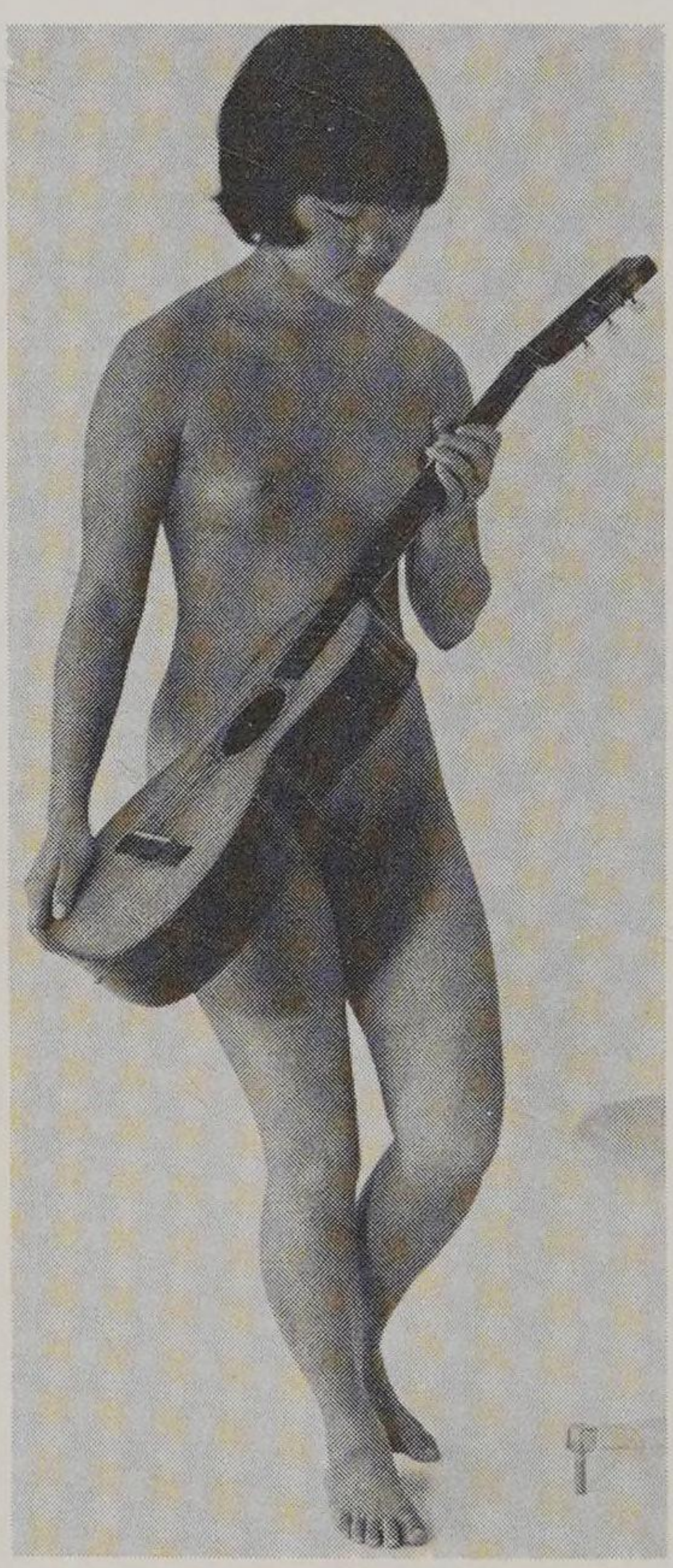
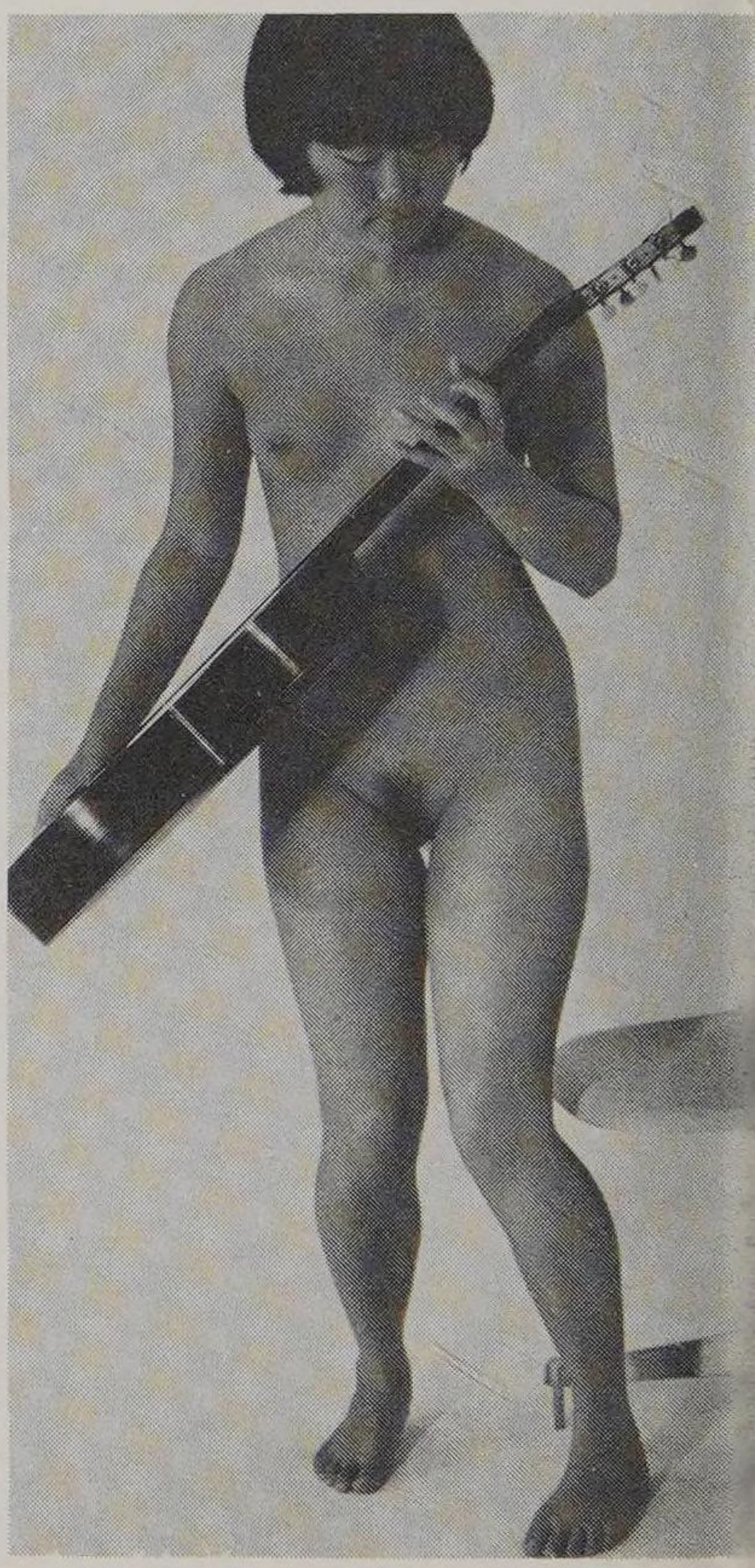
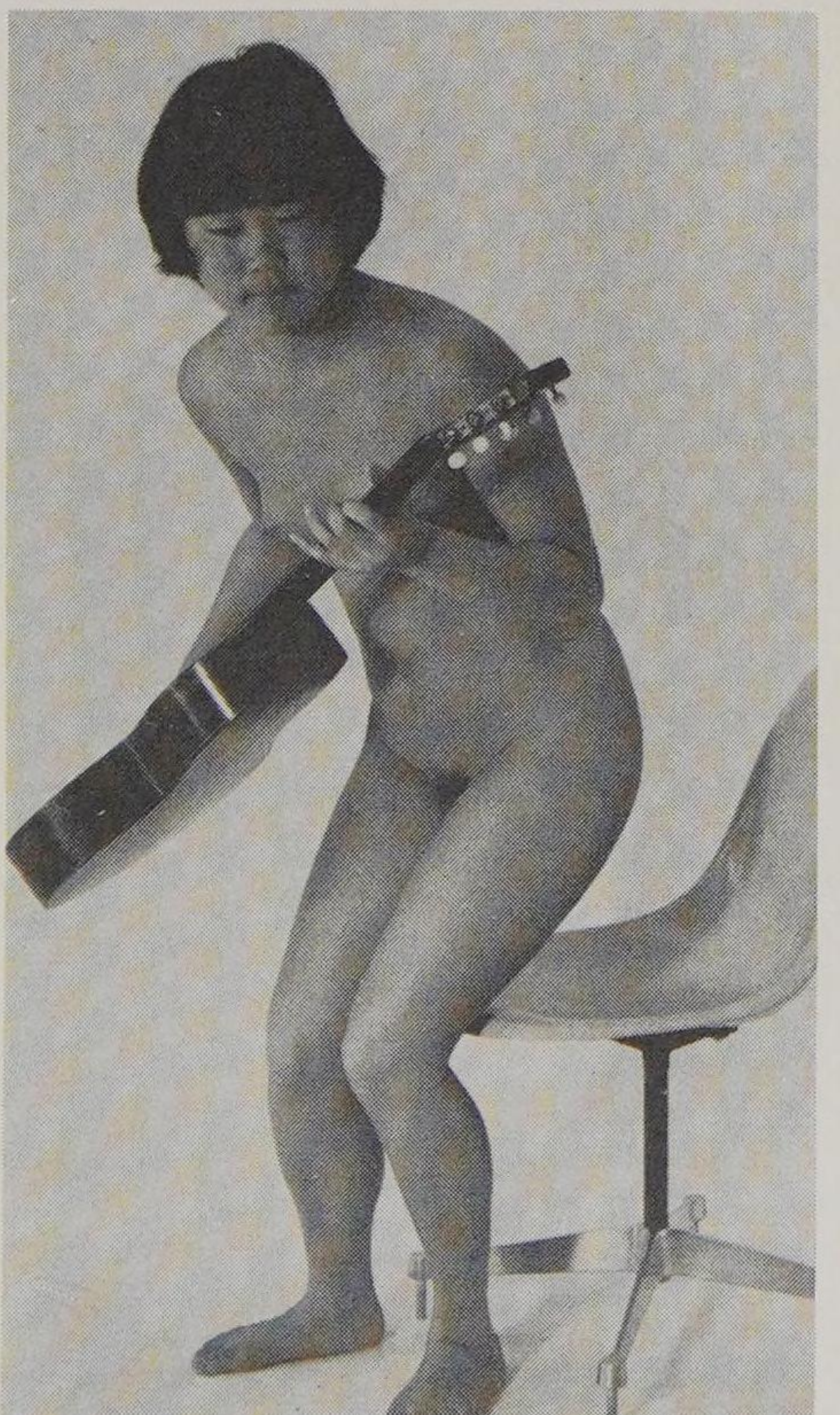

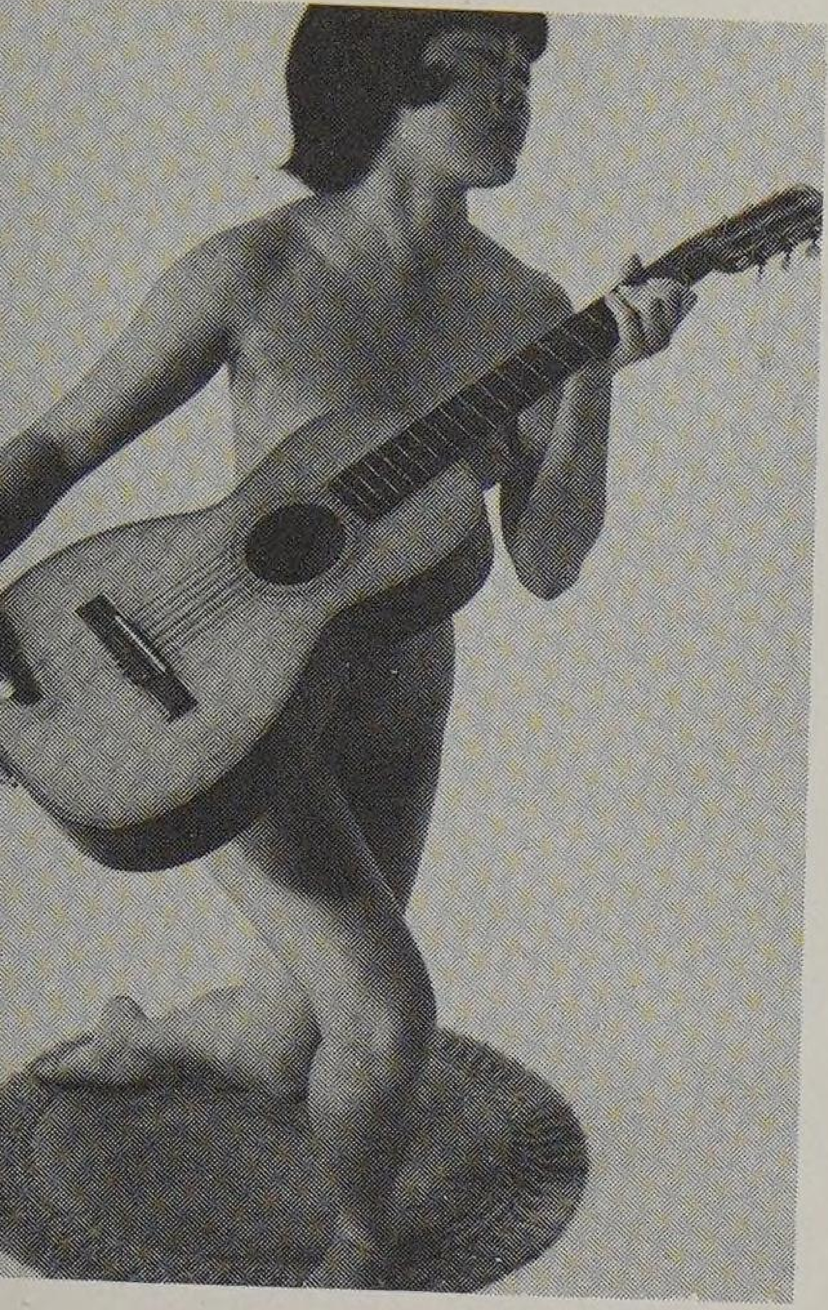

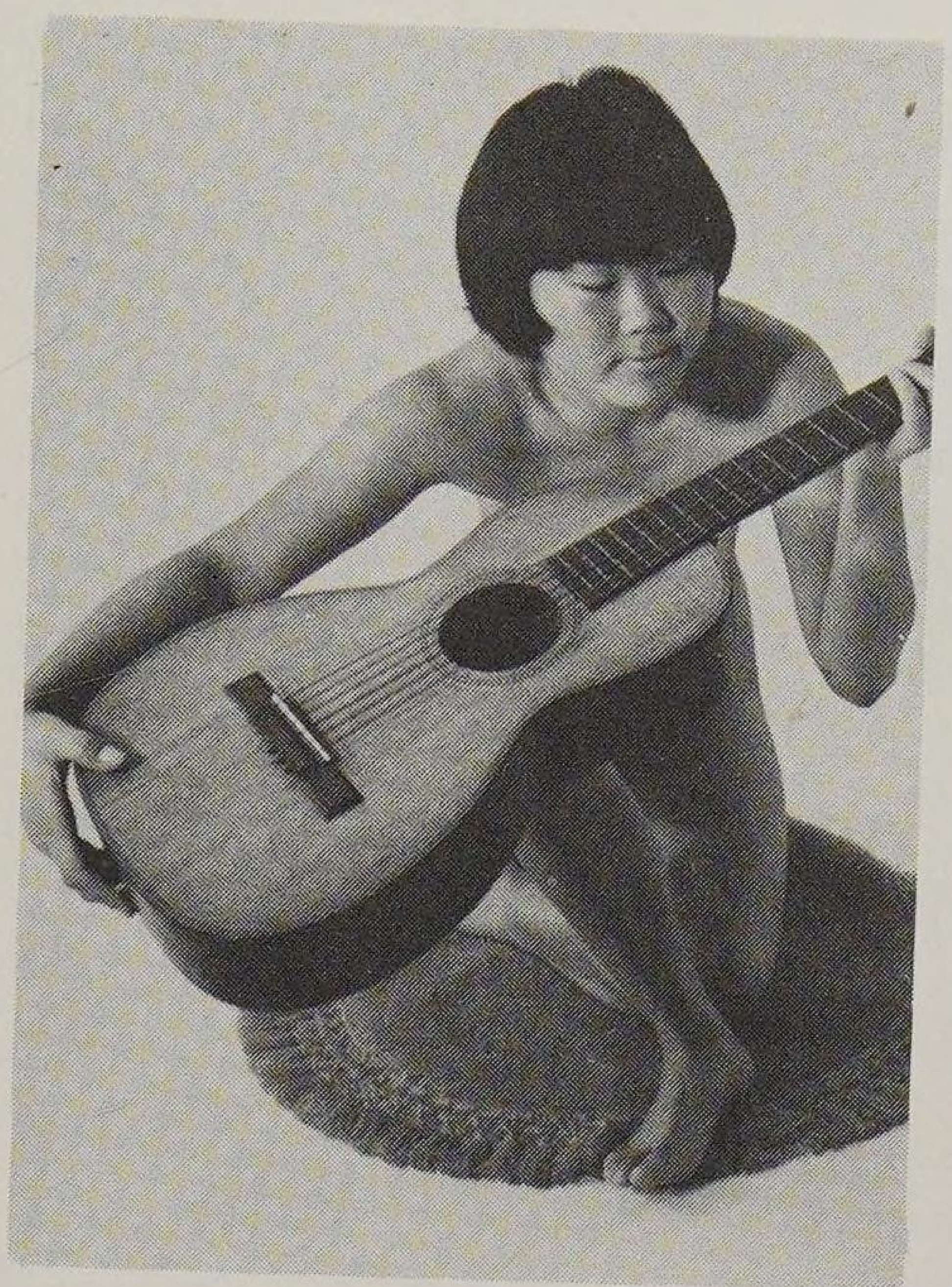

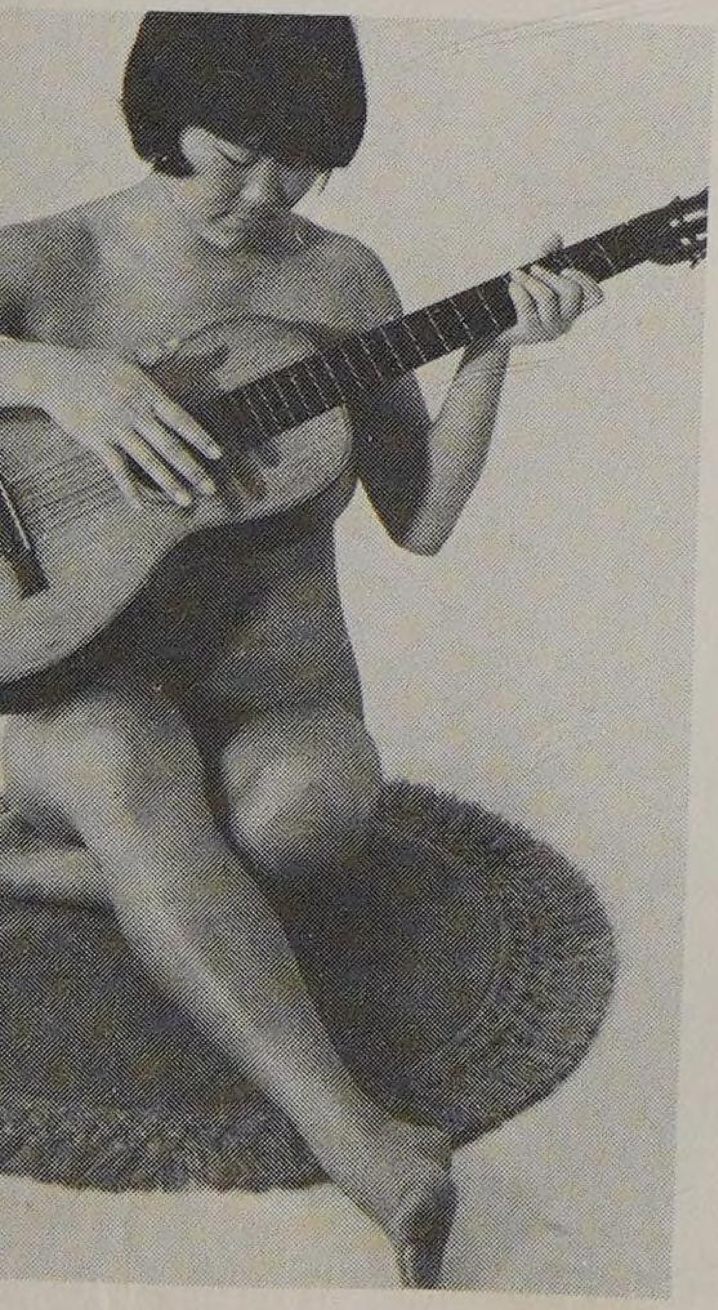
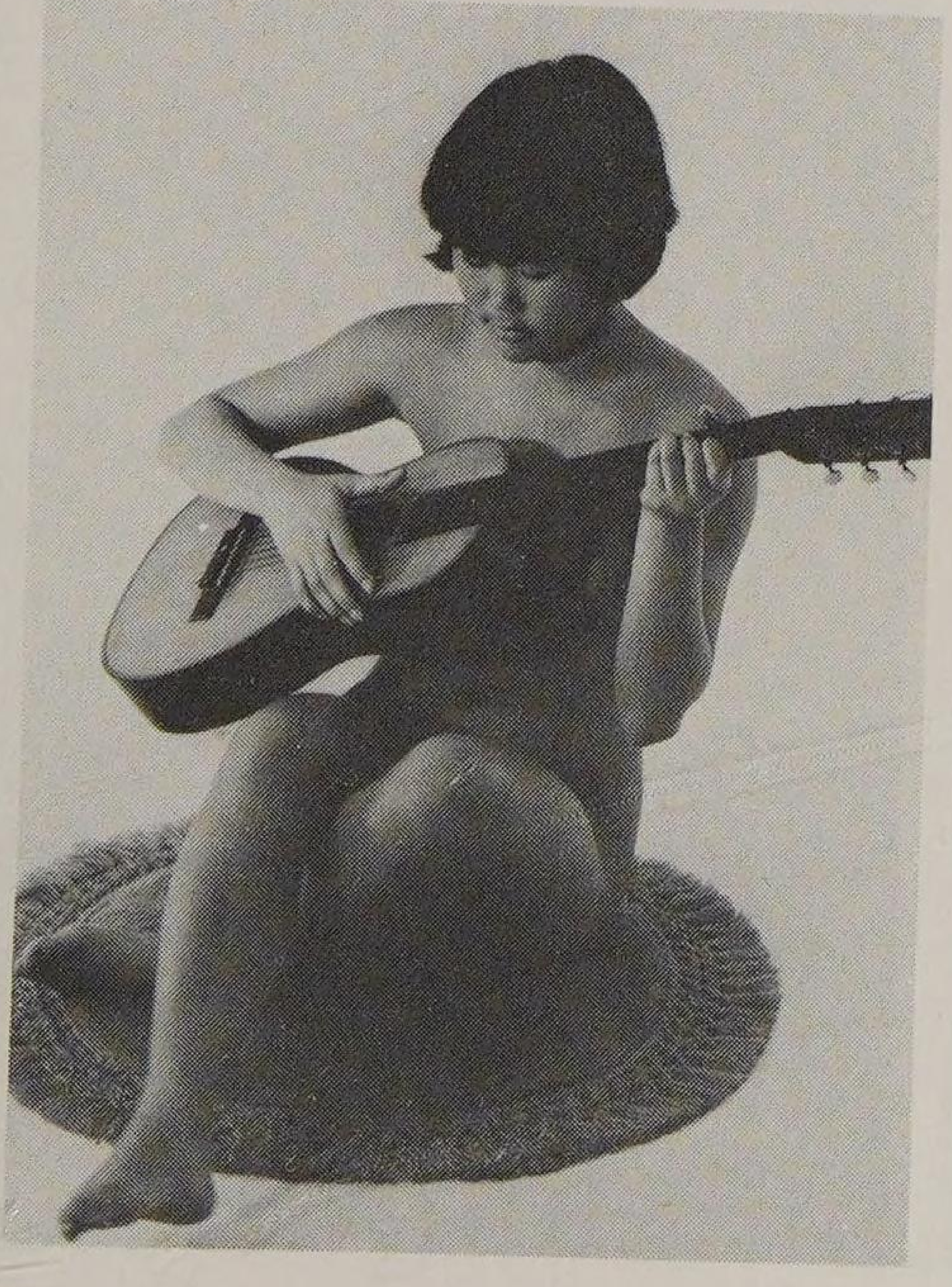

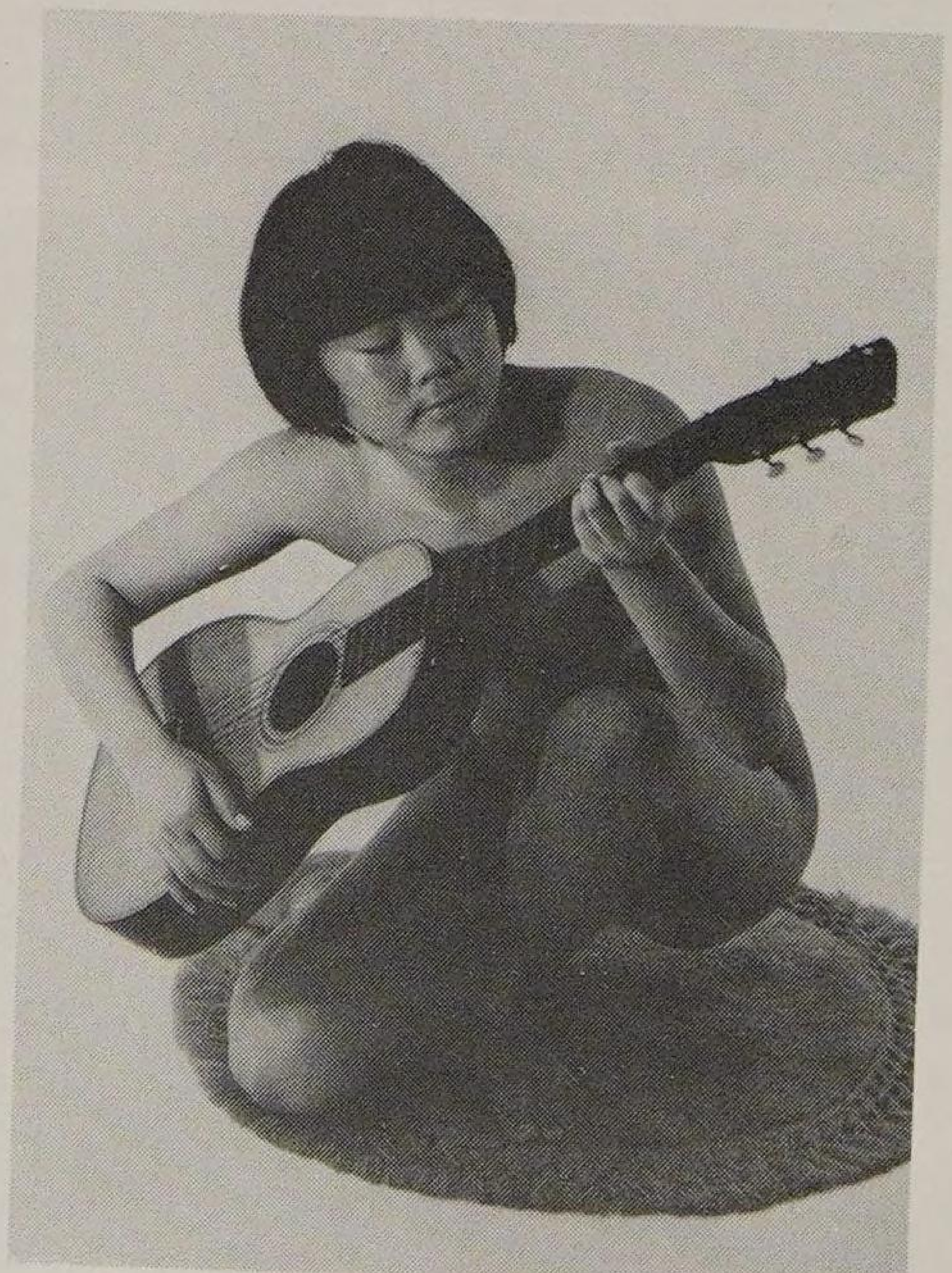

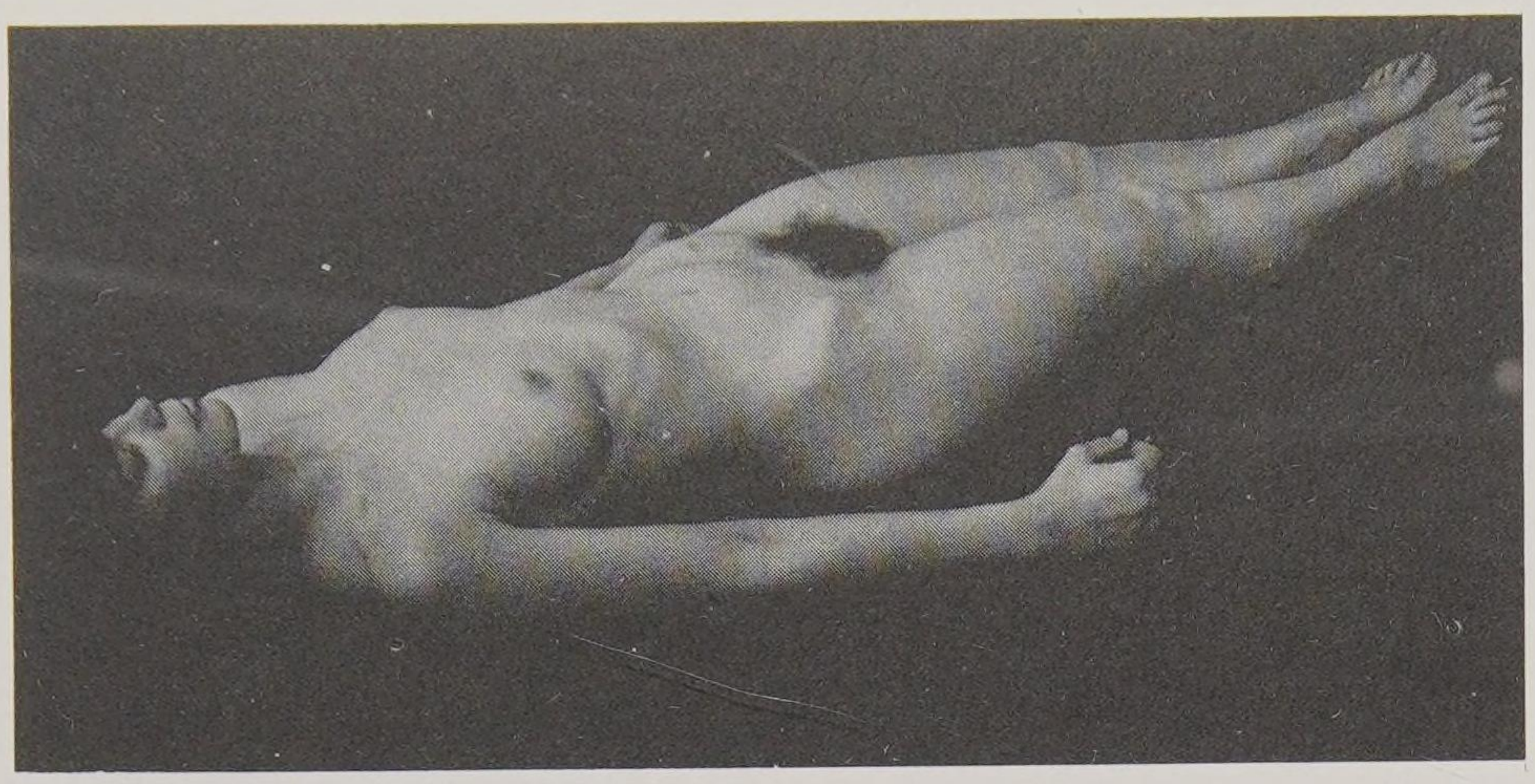
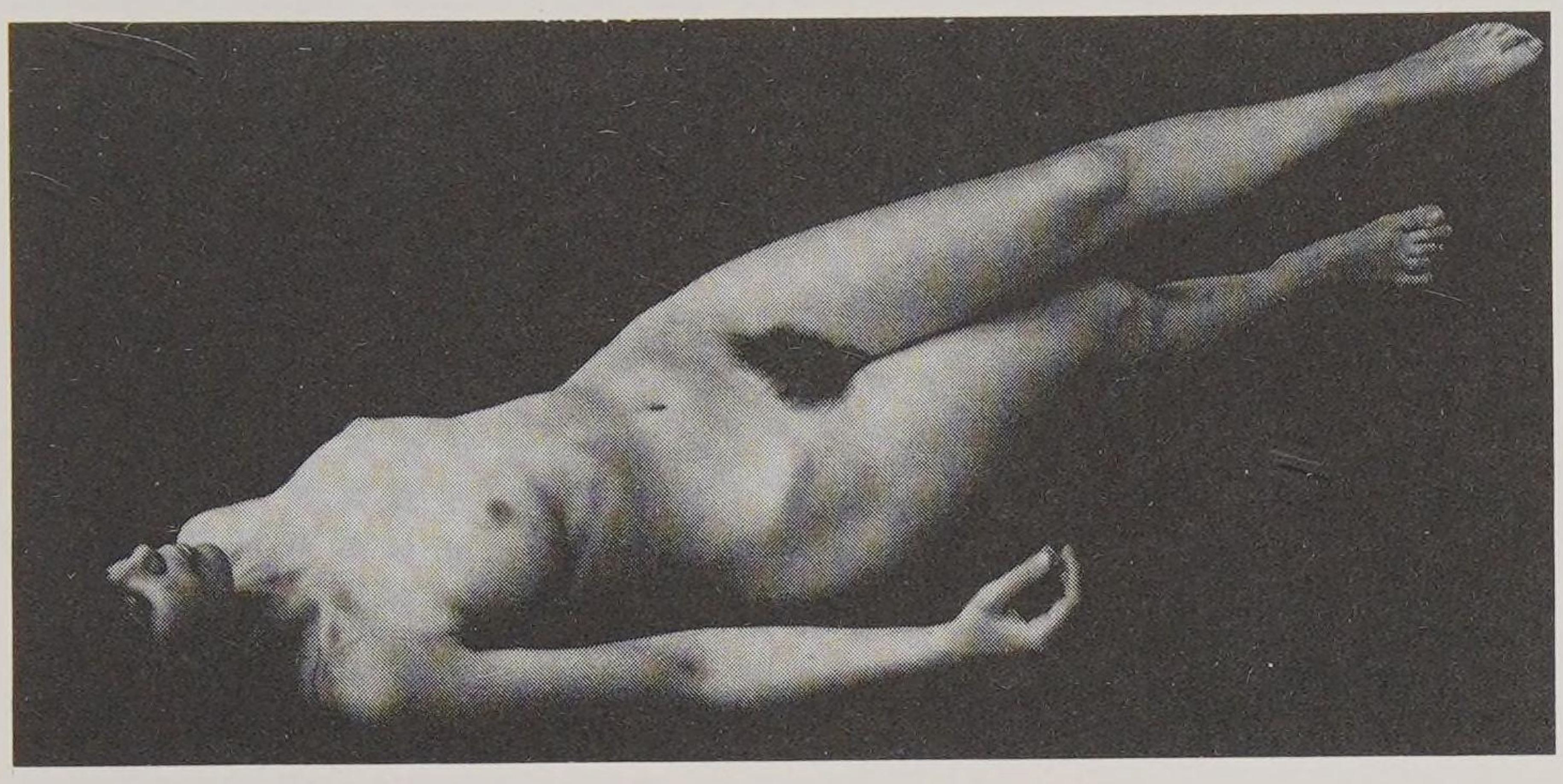
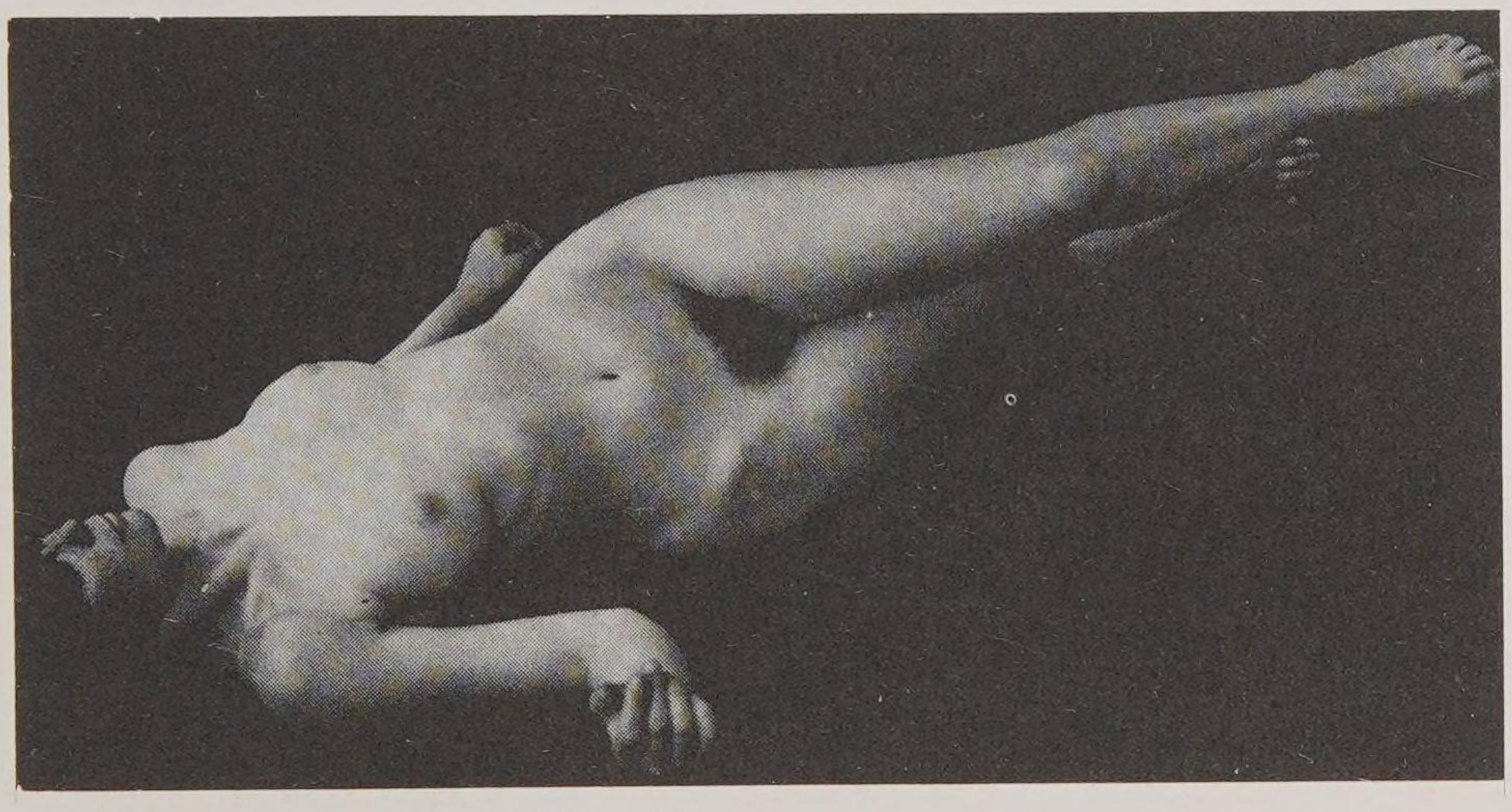
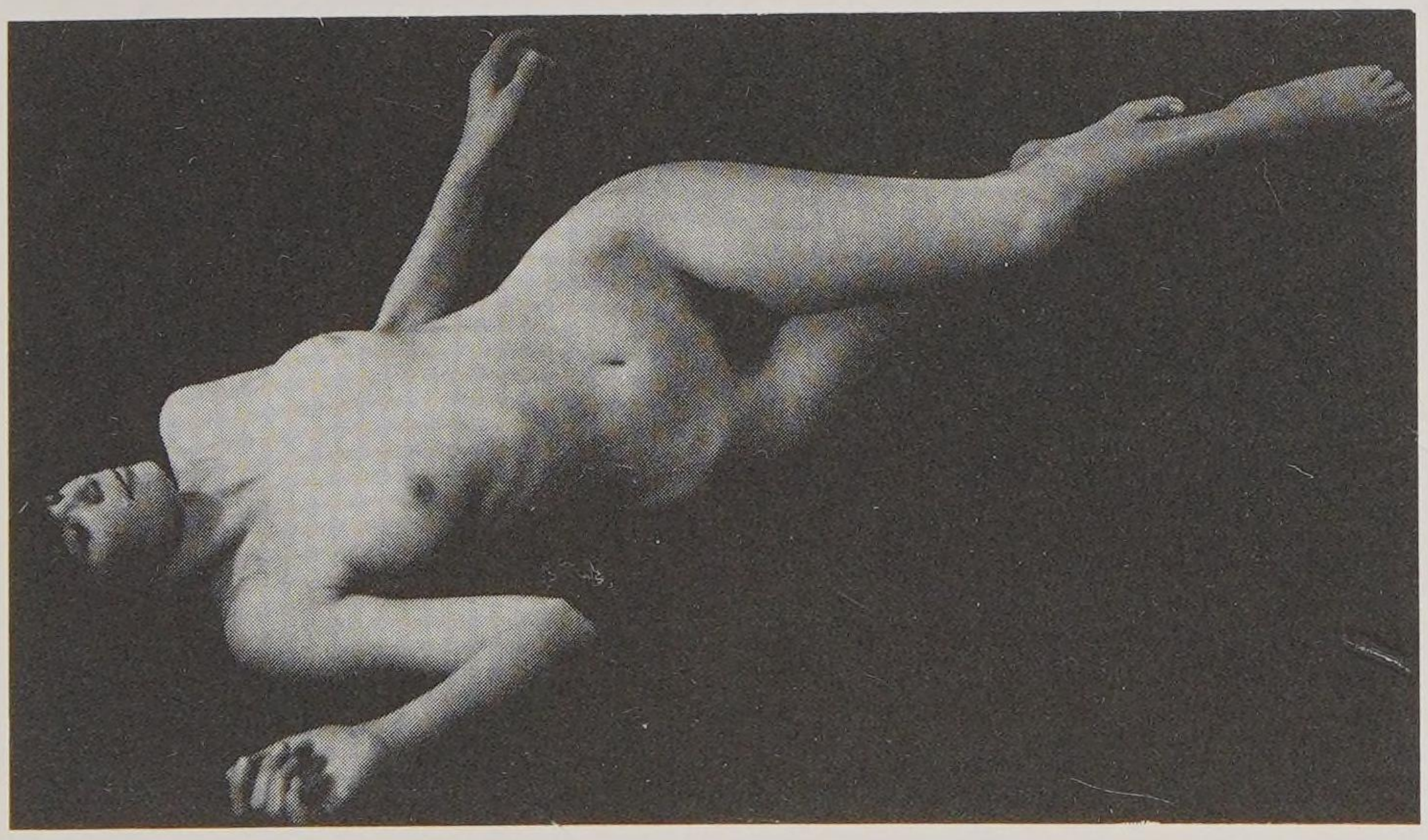
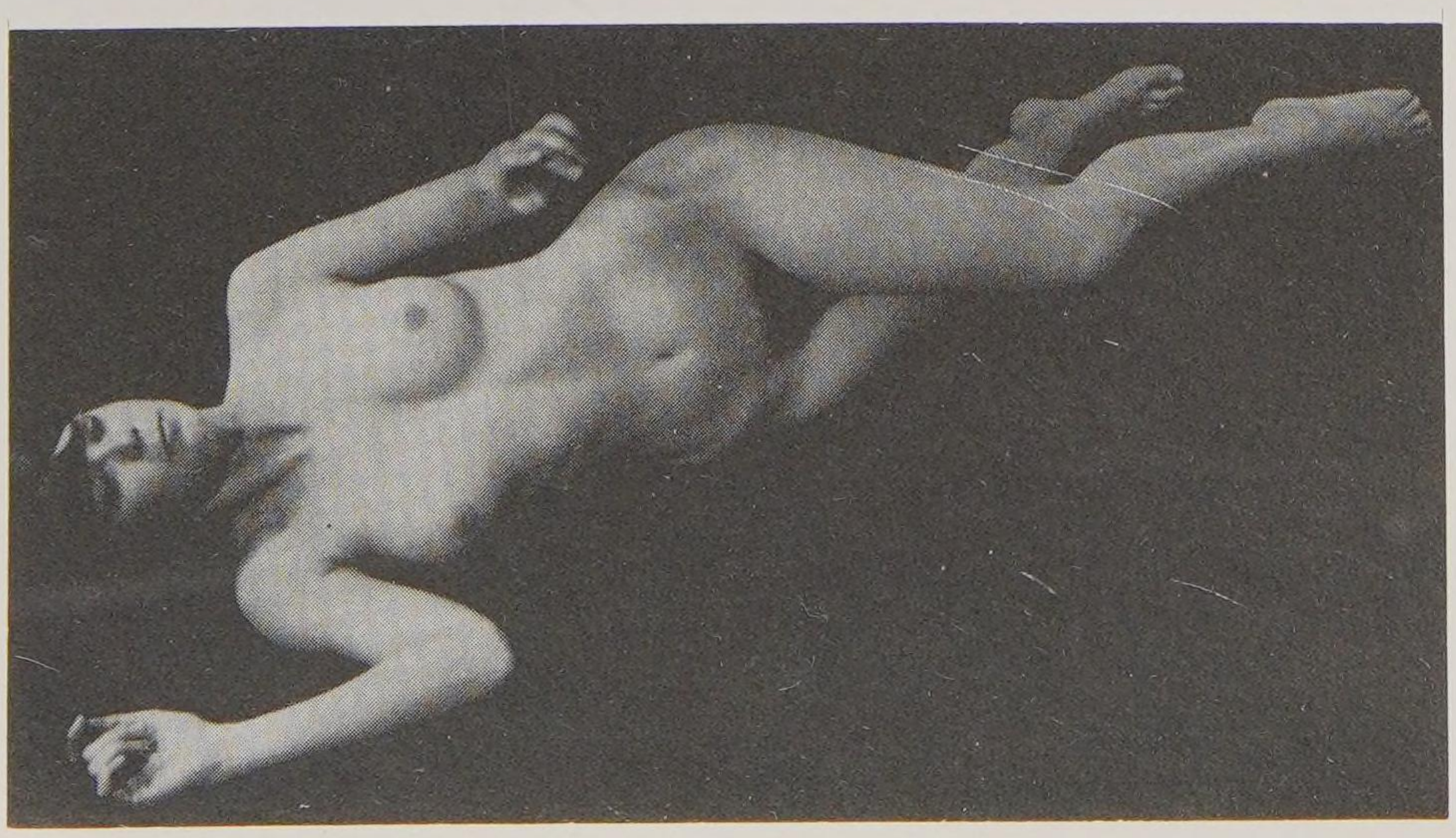
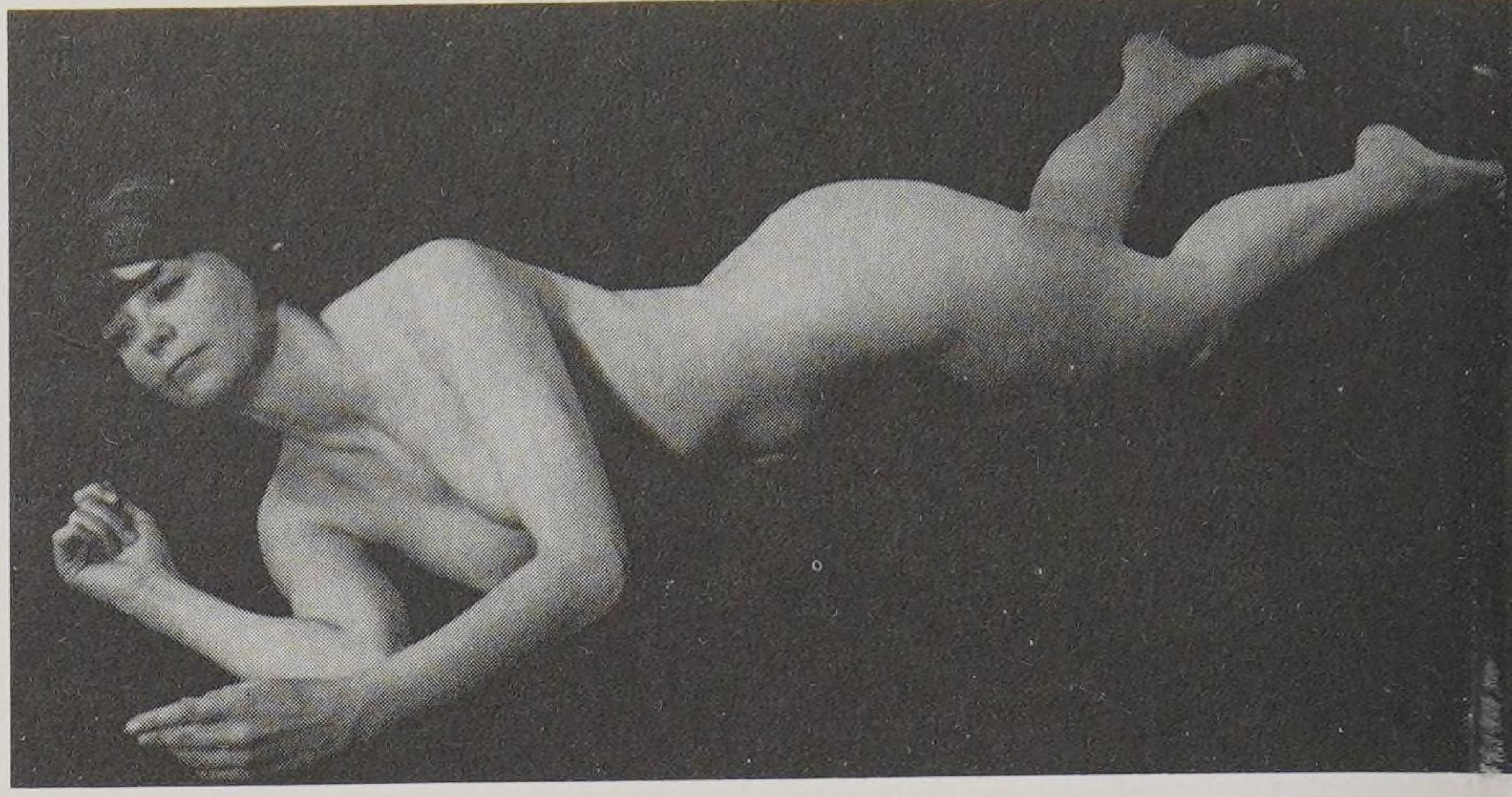
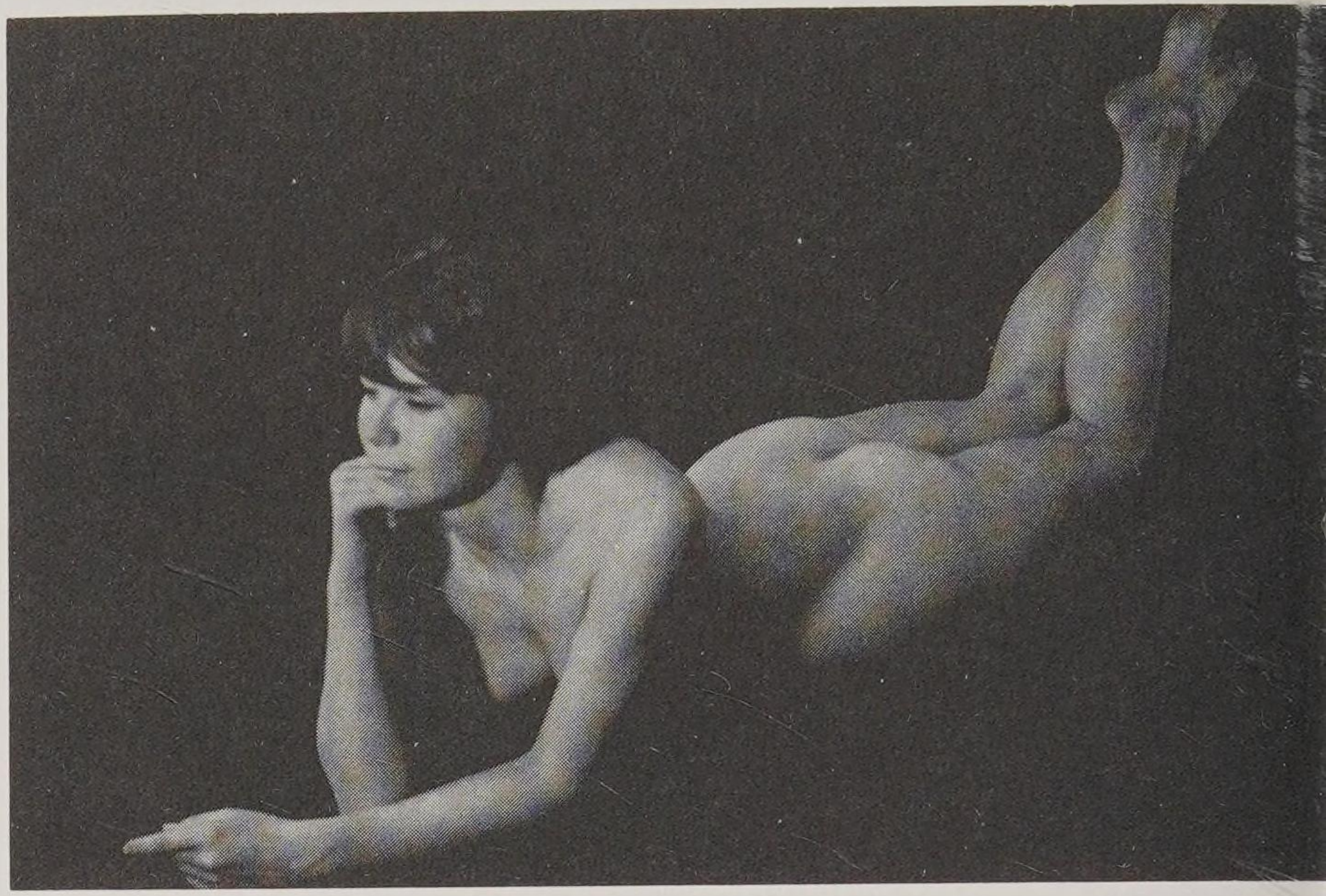
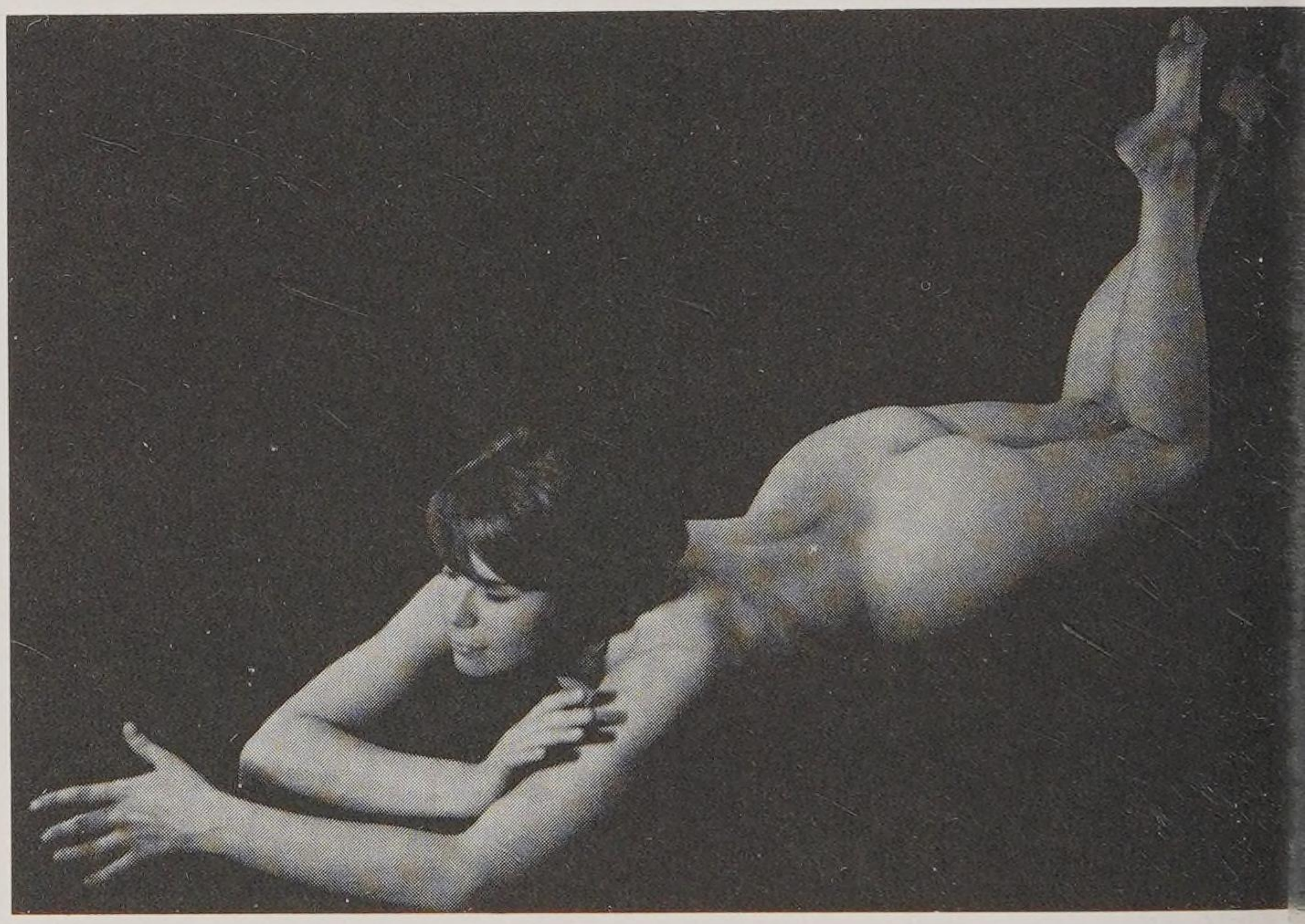
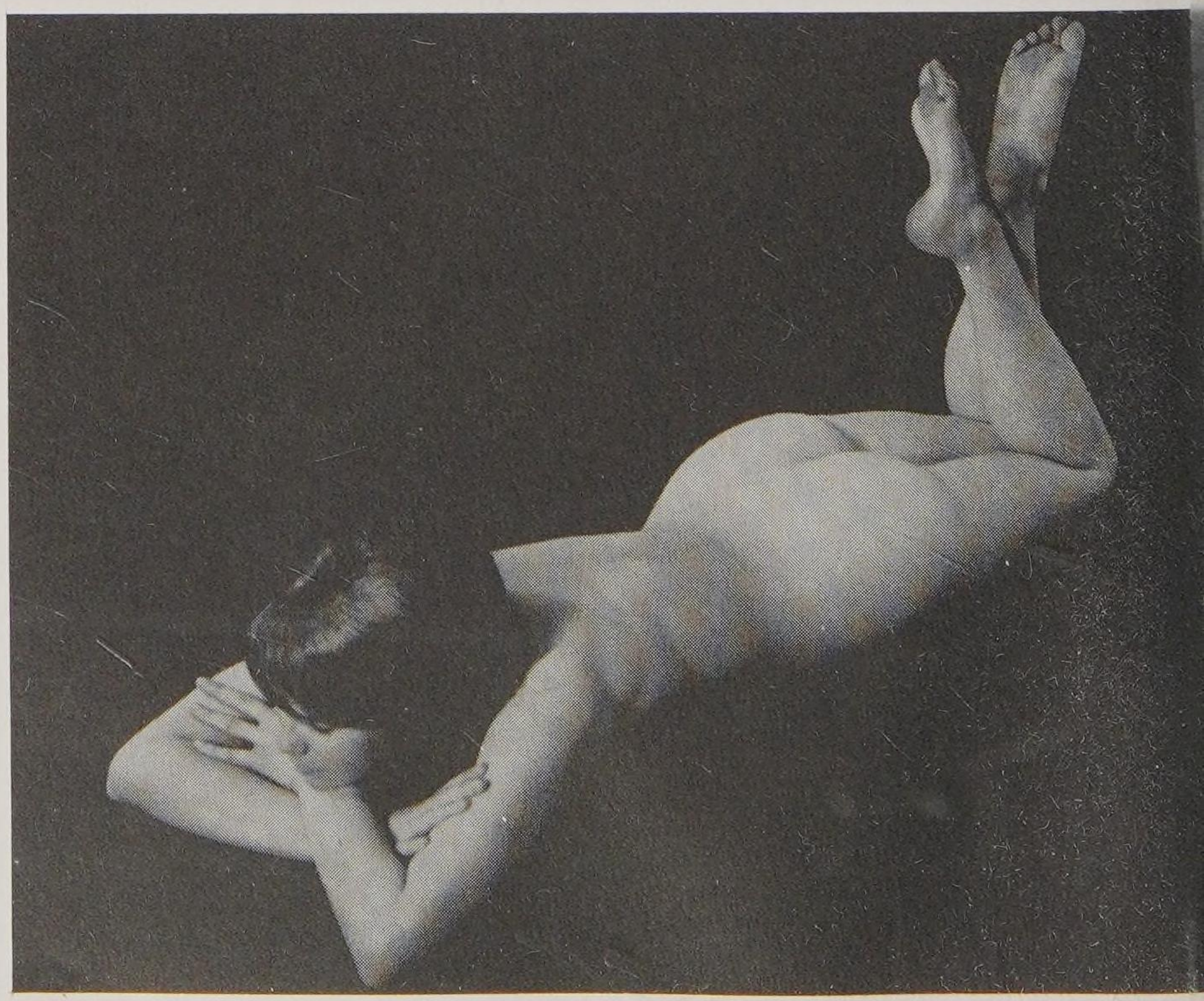

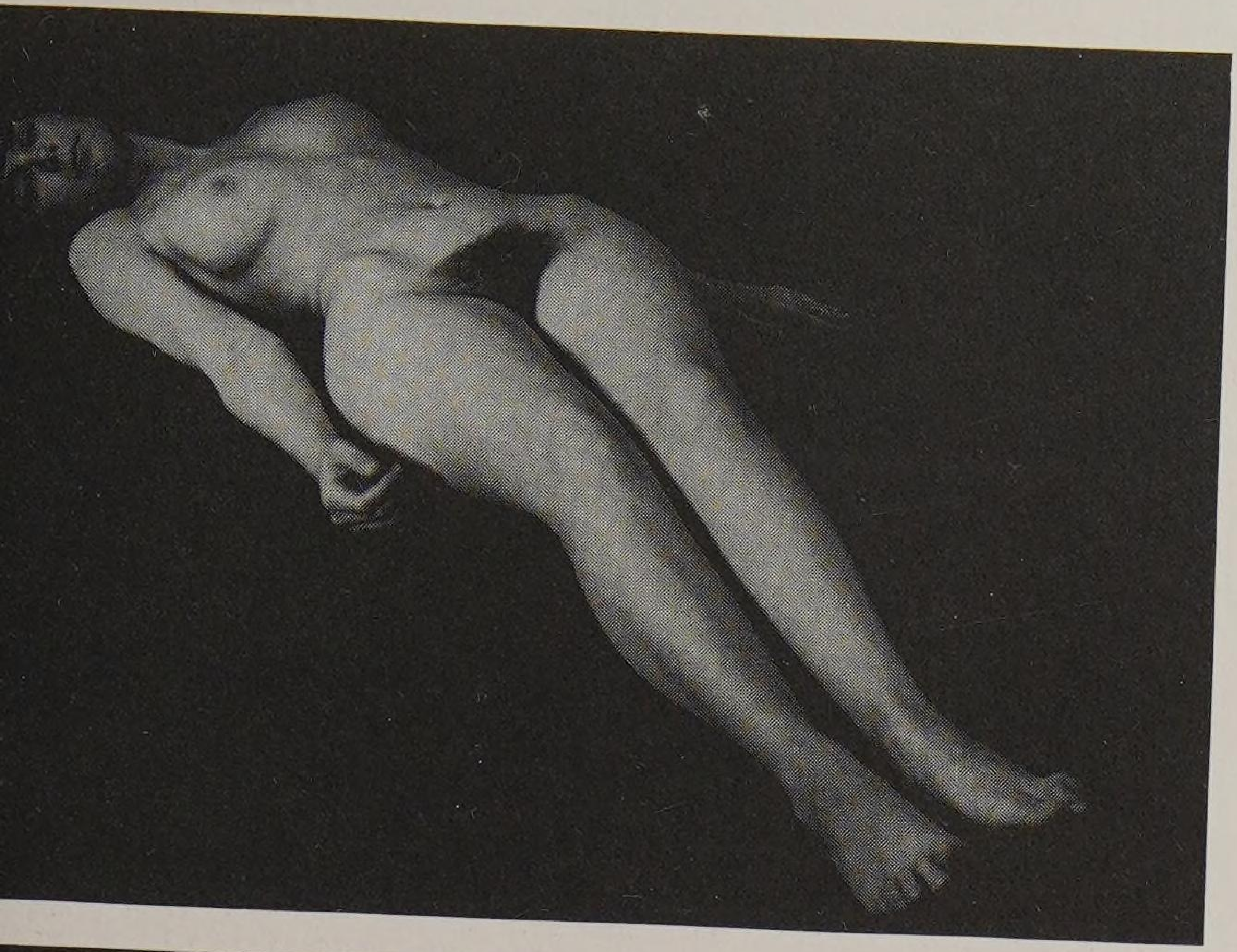

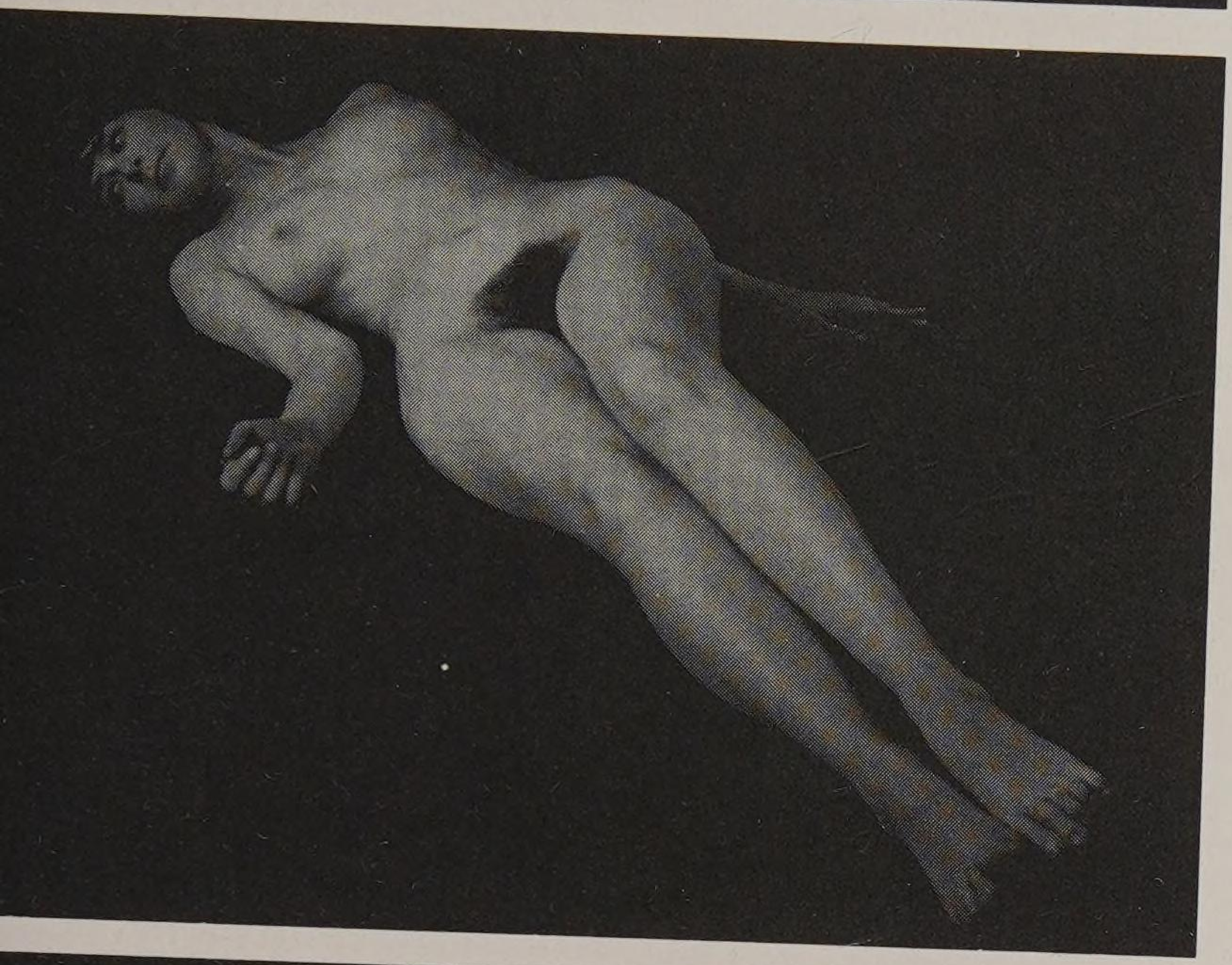

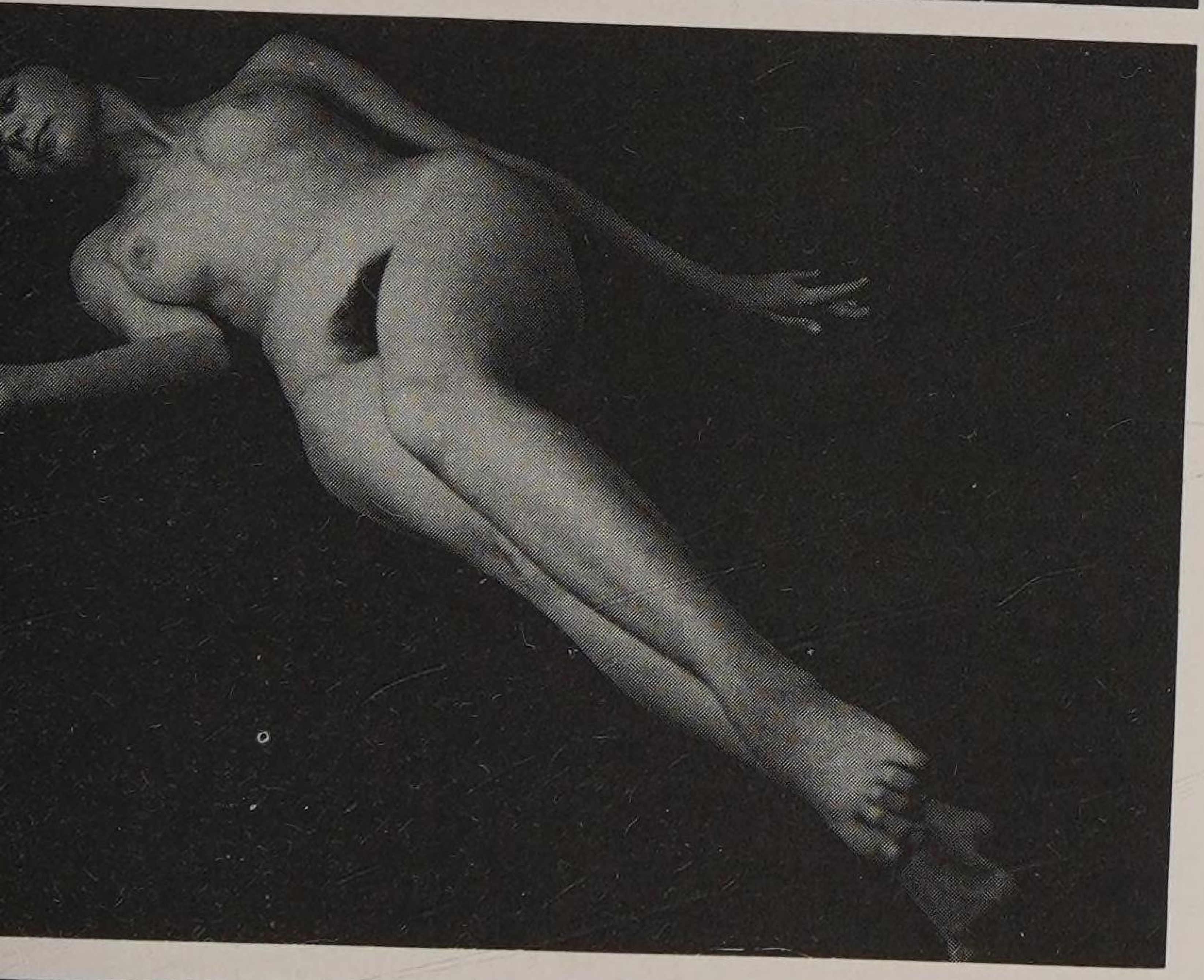

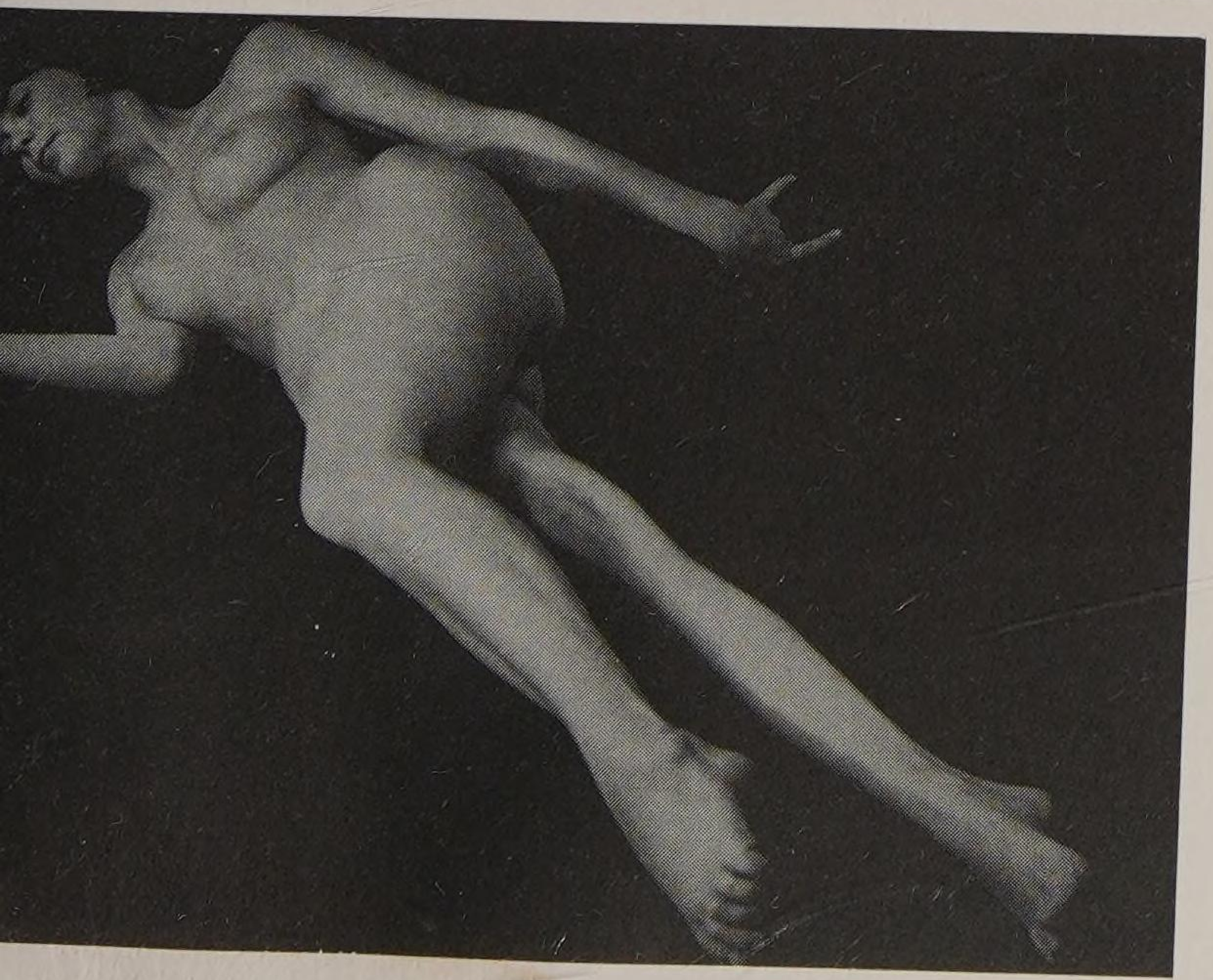

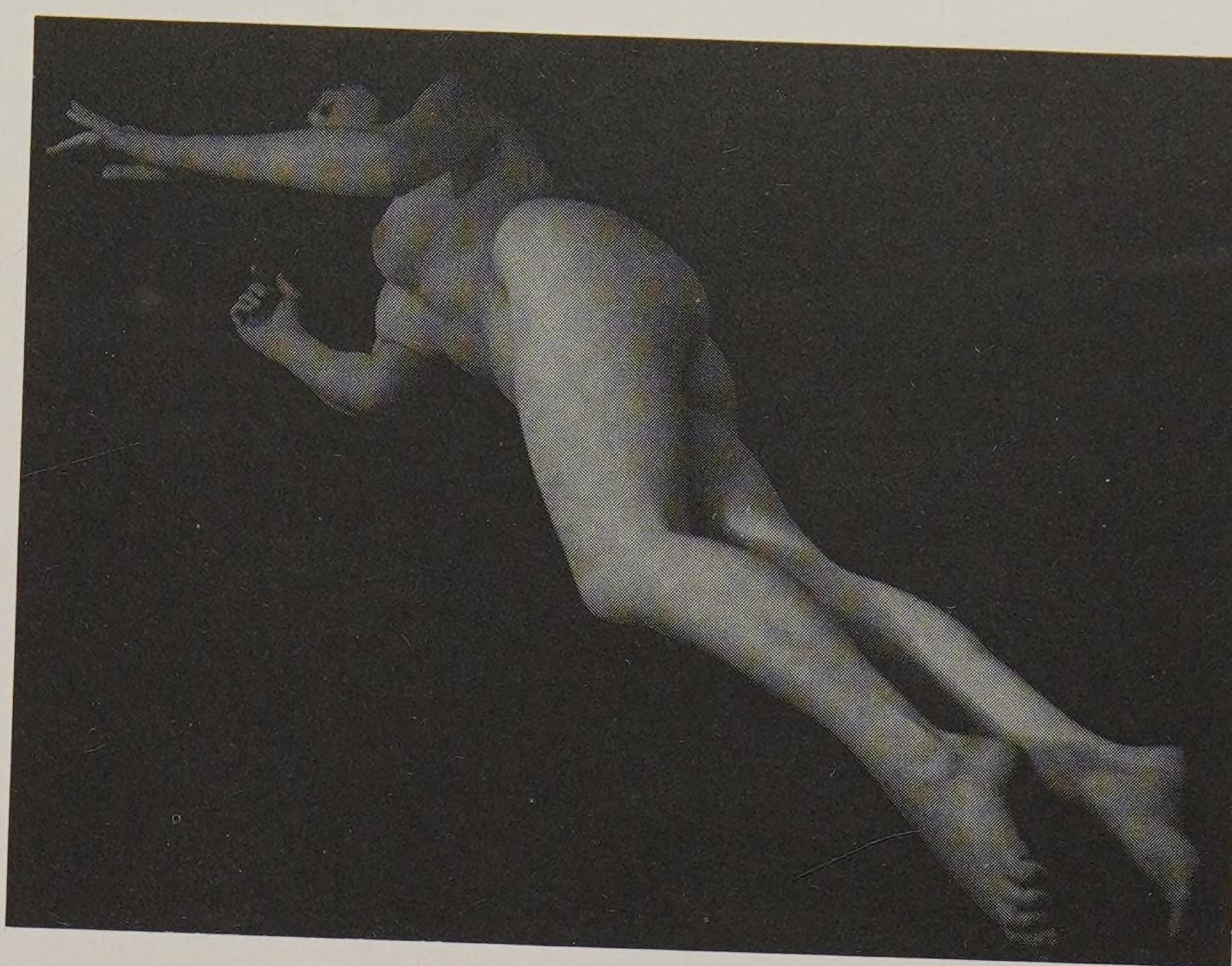

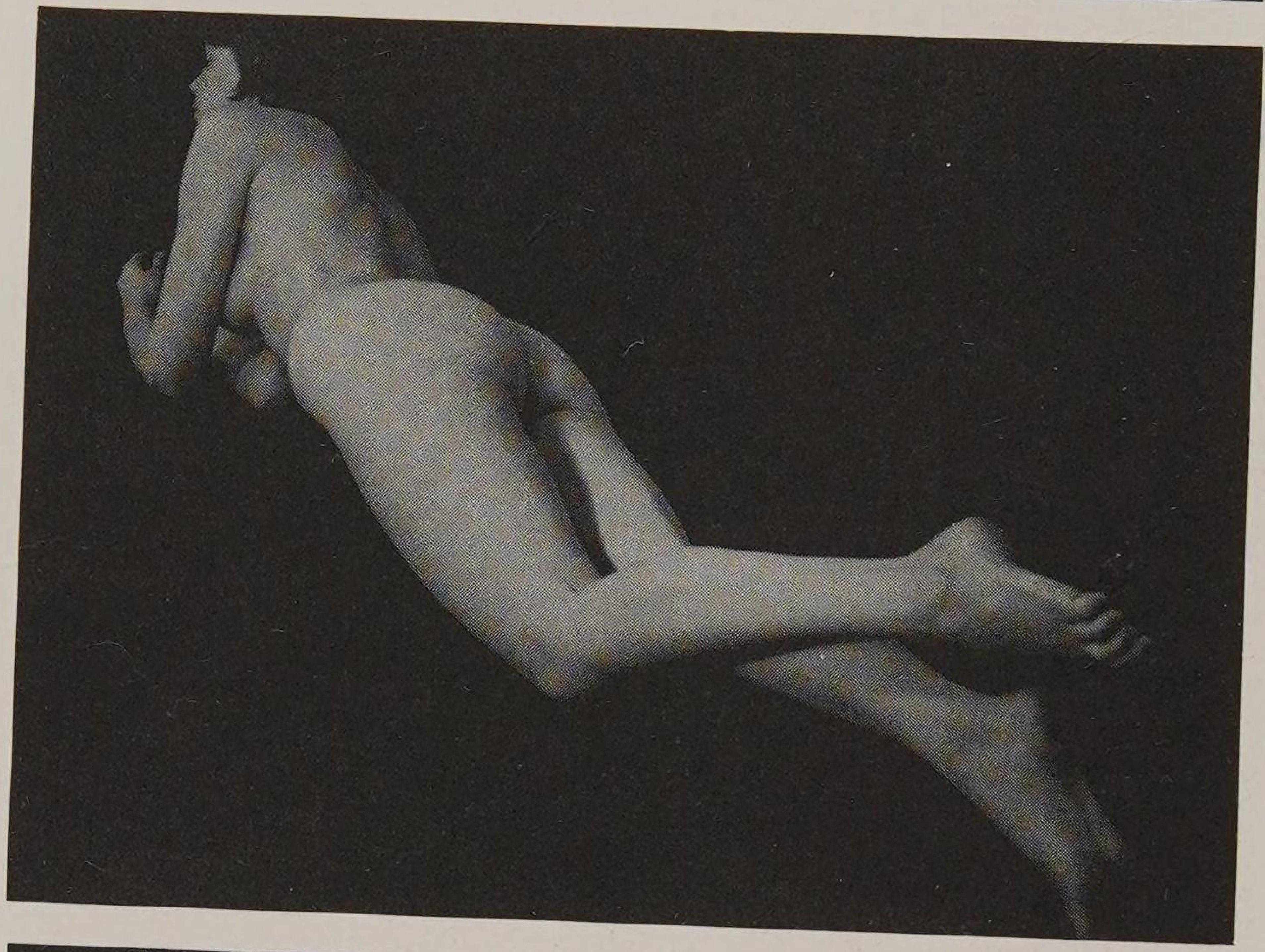

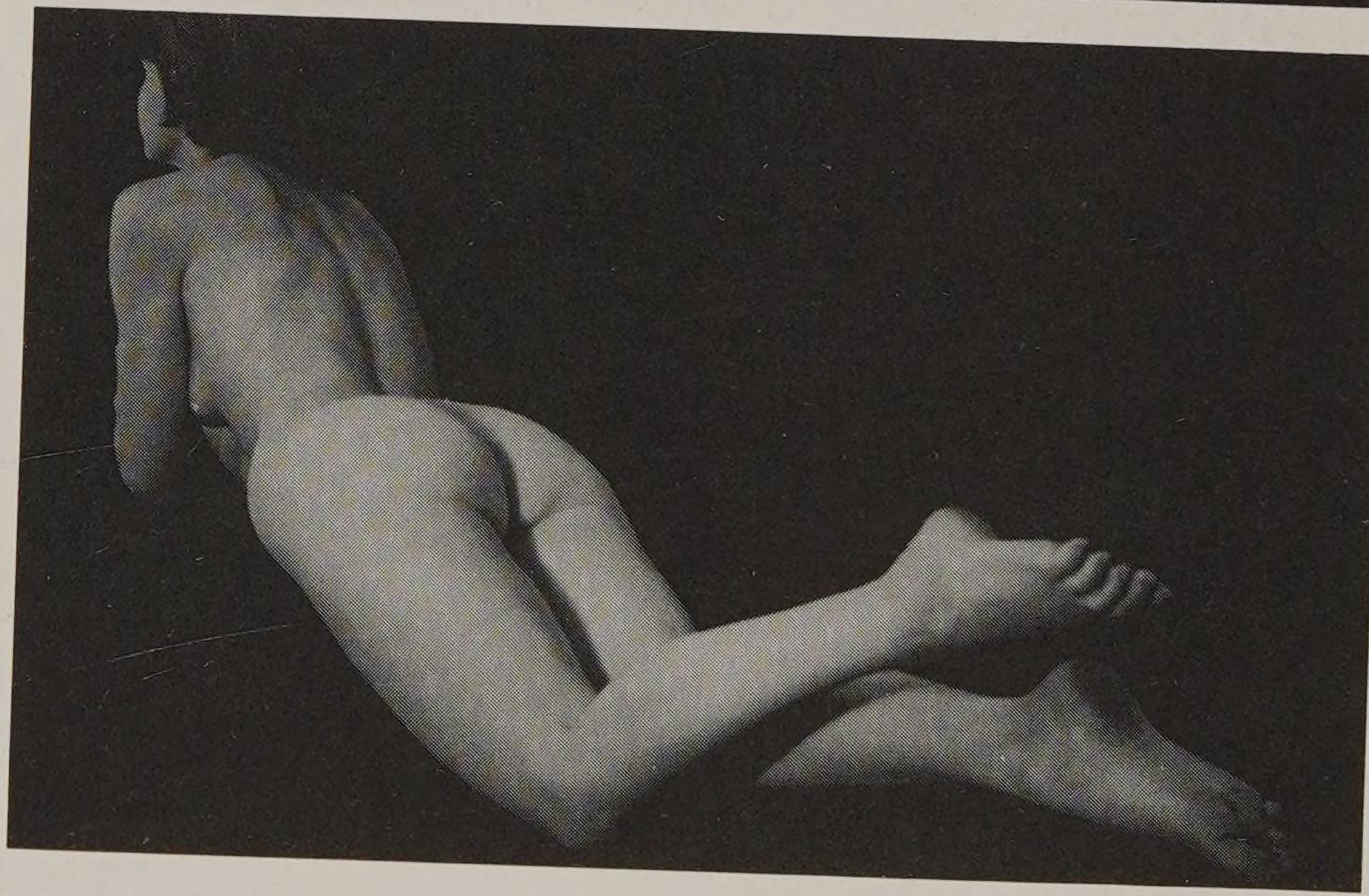

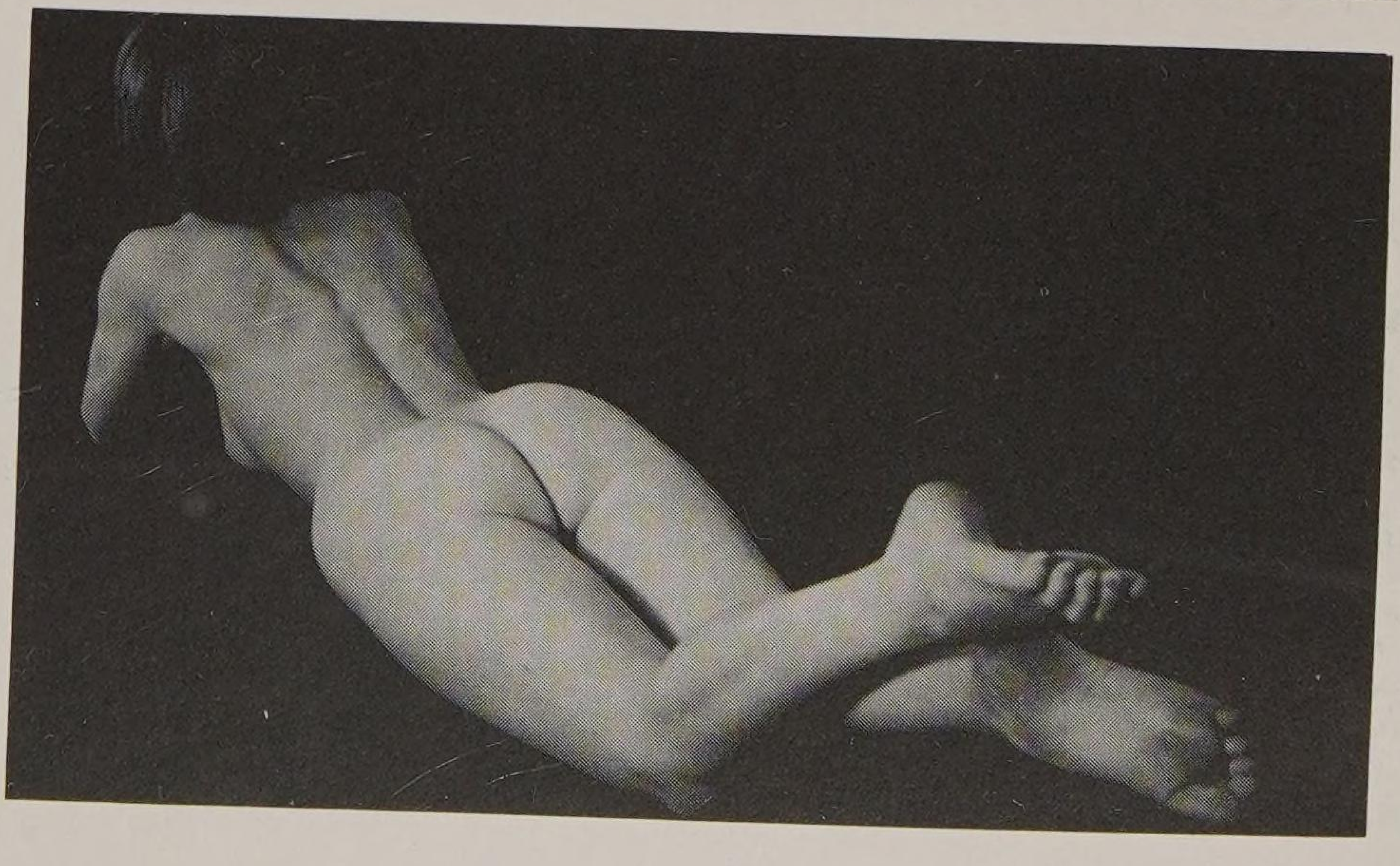

TURN OVER

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"Mr. Jennings has created a useful series of dynamic serial action images of the human figure . . . (that) display the essential rhythm, grace, and vitality of man in action. Artists of varying stages of professional growth will find these action images immensely helpful in sharpening their powers of perception."

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Mr. Jennings has received numerous awards for his work from such organizations as the Society of Illustrators of New York, and the Technical Illustrators and Management Association. His work has been represented—and has won many awards as well—at exhibitions throughout the western United States.

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